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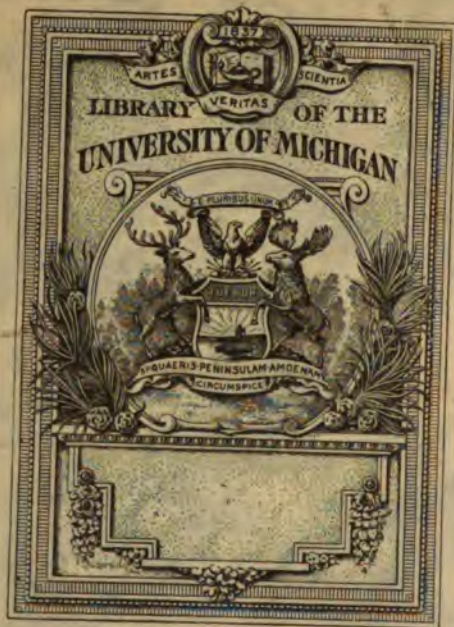
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EDITED BY THE REV.  
SAMUEL COX, D.D.

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# THE EXPOSITOR.

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## *EZEKIEL: AN IDEAL BIOGRAPHY.*

### I. THE YEARS OF PREPARATION.

It may be said, I think, without rashness that for every ten readers of Isaiah, readers who think and love, there are seven readers of Jeremiah, and not more than two or three who turn to Ezekiel with a like spirit of reverential study. In the old lectionary of the English Church, the latter prophet was almost conspicuous by his absence, and there were but fifteen lessons taken from his writings.<sup>1</sup> It is one of the many gains from the new table of lessons that the balance is, in some measure, redressed, and that men are taught not to look on one of the great prophets of the Old Testament as too hard for them to understand or profit by. But it may be questioned how far that lesson has as yet been adequately learnt. The obscurities of Ezekiel's style, the strange animal symbolism of the vision with which his volume opens, the startling nakedness with which as in Chapters xvi. and xxiii. he denounces the sins of his people, all combine to repel rather than attract the reader.

It is with a view to overcoming this repulsion that I enter on a study of the prophet's life and work, after the manner of that of Isaiah, which appeared in a previous volume of the EXPOSITOR.<sup>2</sup> If we can find and appreciate the human element in his writings, picture to ourselves

<sup>1</sup> Nine lessons in the Daily Calendar, six on Sundays. In the present lectionary there are thirty-six in the Daily, and seven in the Sunday Tables.

<sup>2</sup> See EXPOSITOR (New Series), vol. vi.

what the man was in his home and among his people, in his youth, manhood, and old age, we shall be better prepared to take a true estimate of the mission with which he was entrusted to the men of his own generation, and of the eternal truths of which he was the chosen witness, not only to the Church of Israel, but to that of Christ.

1. The date of the prophet's birth may be fixed if, with Hengstenberg, we refer the "thirtieth year" of Chapter i. 1 to the chronology of his life, with almost absolute certainty. It was then the "fifth year" of the captivity which dated from the deportation of Jehoiachin by Nebuchadnezzar in 600 B.C., and this would therefore carry us back to 625 B.C., synchronising with what is known as the era of Nabopolassar, the founder of the late Babylonian monarchy. If, with Ewald, Keil, and Delitzsch, that reference be treated as not proven, it is yet probable that we may fix on this as at least an approximately correct date. There is no trace in Ezekiel's prophecies of his having been called to his prophetic work, like Jeremiah (Jer. i. 6), when he was exceptionally young; and as thirty was fixed by the law as the age at which a Levite entered on the full discharge of his functions (Num. iv. 3, 35), it is not probable that Ezekiel was called to his prophetic office at an earlier period.<sup>1</sup> His ministry as a prophet extends from the fifth year of the captivity (Chap. i. 1), according to the chronological headings of the sections of his volume, to the twenty-seventh, B.C. 573 (Chap. xxix. 17), when he would be, according to this hypothesis, fifty-two. We can hardly think it likely in the nature of things, apart from the reason just given, that a man of Ezekiel's strength and integrity of character would have remained silent during the period of life which is, with most men, that of their *summum of activity*.

<sup>1</sup> This - may be noted, was the age at which our Lord and probably the prophet entered on their prophetic functions (Luke iii. 2, 23).

I start, then, with the assumption that the prophet's birth may be fixed at, or about, B.C. 625. Like Jeremiah (Jer. i. 1,) and probably Isaiah also (see EXPOSITOR for January, 1883), he was of a priestly house. If we might accept the Rabbinic tradition that when the name of a prophet's father is given, it is because the father also was a prophet, the very earliest years of Ezekiel may have familiarized him with the ideal of his future work. Of the father himself, however, we know nothing more than the name, but the name which he gave his son, Ezekiel (*God is strong*), suggests the thought that he too had known what it was to feel that "the hand of the Lord was strong upon him" (Ezek. iii. 14), the sense of a constraining power such as led Jeremiah to exclaim, "Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed" (Jer. xx. 7).<sup>1</sup>

The religious and political condition of Judah at the time of the prophet's birth may be gathered from the history of 2 Kings xxii. and 2 Chronicles xxxiv. The previous year had been memorable for the discovery of the lost book of the Law, not necessarily in the form of the Pentateuch with which we are familiar, and which it assumed probably under Ezra's editorship; possibly, whatever views we take of the origin and date of that book, in that of the book which we now know as Deuteronomy; more probably, as I venture to think, in that of Leviticus, which during the idolatrous reigns of Manasseh and Amon had necessarily been disused and had naturally been forgotten, having perhaps been hidden, in the hope of a better time, by some of the priests or Levites whom it chiefly concerned, and who were its natural custodians. The threats of coming judgments in Leviticus xxvi. answer to the account given in 2 Kings xxii. quite as closely as do those of Deuteronomy

<sup>1</sup> I notice, only to reject, Hengstenberg's extraordinary and unproved assertion, that the names of all the canonical prophets were assumed by them when they entered on their new office, and not given them in their infancy (Hengstenberg, *Ezekiel*, on i. 1.)

xxviii., and the many references to the former in the earlier chapters of Ezekiel's writings justify the inference that it was the former and not the latter, that struck terror into the minds of the king and people when the book of the Law was read.<sup>1</sup>

Ezekiel's boyhood to the age of thirteen was accordingly spent in all the stir and excitement of Josiah's reformation, characterized, as it necessarily was, by the priestly Levitical stamp which had been thus impressed upon it. Hilkiyah the priest and Huldah the prophetess must have been familiar names to him. The cleansing of the Temple from all that remained of the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove (the obscene symbol of the *Asherah*), and for the host of heaven (2 Kings xxiii. 4), the destruction of the local sanctuaries of the high places, and of the altar at Bethel, the keeping of the great Passover (2 Kings xxiii. 22), must have been among the earliest traditions of his childhood. The whole bent of his education must, in the nature of things, have been that of one who was to be a true priest according to the old ideal. A new prominence must have been given to the Levitical law in his training which it had not had in that of Isaiah or even of Jeremiah, issuing in a somewhat narrower range of thought and reading than that of the former, a somewhat more liturgical and ceremonial type of character than that of the latter. We cannot, by any effort of imagination, think of either of those prophets as planning the restoration of the ruined temple, with all the measurements and details which we find in the closing chapters (xl.-xlviii.) of Ezekiel. In the influence of that refound codex of Leviticus on the prophet's mind we have the key to all that is most characteristic in his writings.

<sup>1</sup> Compare—

Lev. xxvi. 19, and Ezek. vii. 24.	
"    22,          "    v. 17.	
"    25,          "    vi. 13.	
"    26,          "    iv. 16.	

Lev. xxvi. 28 and Ezek. v. 13.	
"    29,          "    v. 10.	
"    31,          "    vi. 6.	
and many other passages.	



We ask ourselves, as we trace the mental history of poets, thinkers, statesmen, What was their environment, who were they who, somewhat older it may be than themselves, were working round them, influencing them, directly or indirectly, by action or reaction? Among Ezekiel's contemporaries one name stands out with an illustrious pre-eminence. Jeremiah, the priest of Anathoth, ministering in the Temple, prophesying in the streets of Jerusalem, must have been known to the son of Buzi who was in training for the priesthood; and there, or at Anathoth, he may have listened eagerly to his teaching. Looking to the chronology of Jeremiah's life, we find that at an earlier age than was common, probably therefore between twenty and twenty-five, he was called to his work as a prophet in the thirteenth year of Josiah, four years before the discovery of the "book of the law of the Lord," and five years before the date which we have been led to fix for the birth of Ezekiel. During the whole of the younger prophet's earlier years, therefore, he must have lived as under the shadow of the elder. At the death of Josiah in B.C. 610, Jeremiah was circ. 38-43 years of age, while Ezekiel was only fifteen. The time of companionship which remained after that date was comparatively short. The reign of Jehoahaz the son of Josiah lasted but three months, that of his brother Jehoiakim for eleven years, that of Jehoiachin for three months and ten days. Then came the first capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the first great deportation of the captives of official standing and social position. During that period of eleven years and a half accordingly Ezekiel must have been under Jeremiah's immediate influence, but as he was only twenty-five or twenty-six at its close, and had received no direct call to the office of a prophet, we cannot wonder that he abstained as yet from being more than a silent witness of his work. After the

deportation, *i.e.* during the whole reign of Zedekiah, his direct knowledge of Jeremiah's teaching ceased, and all that reached him must have been through such messengers as came from time to time from Jerusalem to the land of his exile, or through the epistle which the older prophet sent "to the priests and to the prophets and to all the people" whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried into captivity in Babylon (Jer. xxix. 1-32).

A careful study of Ezekiel's prophecies will shew how largely he had profited by the teaching of the prophet, at whose feet he had thus sat. That symbolic eating of the roll of a book which was sweet as honey in his mouth (Ezek. iii. 2) was the acted rendering of Jeremiah's words, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer. xv. 16). The great lesson of the personal responsibility of each man for his own sin, as distinct from the distorted view of a transmitted and inherited guilt, which embodied itself in the popular proverb that "the fathers had eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth were set on edge," which was expanded by the one prophet (Ezek. xviii. 2-29), was the distinct echo of the self-same teaching proclaimed more concisely by the other (Jer. xxxi. 29). It was no new thing for Ezekiel to find his chief opponents in the false prophets and diviners among the children of the captivity (Ezek. xiii. 2, 3), for they had been both in Jerusalem and in Babylon the hinderers and slanderers of the word of the Lord as it came from the lips of Jeremiah (Jer. xiv. 14, xxiii. 16). Of the personal home life of Ezekiel we know but little. He was married to one who was as the "desire of his eyes" (Ezek. xxiv. 16), but we have no mention, as in the case of Isaiah, of any children. Jeremiah, it will be remembered, was probably unmarried, so that in this respect the prophet of the Exile occupied, as it were, an intermediate position between the other two.

How the five years were spent that filled up the interval between the Exile and the vision which determined the vocation of Ezekiel's after-life we can only conjecture. Under the reign of Zedekiah things were going from bad to worse in Jerusalem. The king was occupied with abortive plans for an alliance with Egypt and other nations which might help him to cast off the yoke of the Chaldeans (Jer. xxvii. 3, xxxvii. 1-5);<sup>1</sup> halting between two opinions in his treatment of Jeremiah, now disposed to protect him against his persecutors, to seek his counsels and implore his intercession (Jer. xxi. 2), now listening to the false prophets who promised freedom and restoration within two full years (Jer. xxviii. 11). Jeremiah, on his side, had warned the exiles in Babylon that their captivity would run its appointed length of seventy years (Jer. xxix. 10), that their wisdom would be to seek the peace of the city to which they had been brought, to build houses and plant gardens, as if it were their home, and to refrain from all plots and schemes against their conquerors (Jer. xxix. 4-7). The remoter exiles in Tel-Abib, on the banks of Chebar, must be thought of as open to all these conflicting influences; now listening to the voice of warning, now hardening their hearts against it, in any case shewing no signs of real repentance and conversion. They too, like other exiles, may have sat down and wept by the waters of Babylon, hanging their harps upon the trees that were therein, comforting themselves with their prayers for vengeance upon their conquerors (Ps. cxxxvii.).

## II. THE CALL TO A PROPHET'S WORK.

So far as the analogy of the work of other prophets helps to guide us, the mind of Ezekiel must have been filled with wild, sad, perplexing thoughts, as he brooded over the sins

<sup>1</sup> The name of Jehoiakim in Chapter xxvii. 1 is clearly an error of transcription.

and miseries of his people, before he found the solution of his doubts in the vision of the glory of the Lord, which called him, as a like vision had called Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, to the office of a prophet. That call did not break in, as it were, upon the quiet routine of an untroubled life, but was the crisis of a long preparation, a Divine intervention, at the moment when it was most needed to hinder the man to whom it came from sinking utterly in the depths of his sorrow and despair, adapted in all its circumstances and details to the antecedent conditions of his soul.

In the light of that postulate, accordingly, (one might almost call it an axiom in dealing with the life of any prophet of Jehovah), we have now to enter on an examination of those circumstances. We must think of Ezekiel as having left the town or village in which he dwelt, and going forth alone to the banks of the river Chebar, as it flowed on through the wide plains of the Upper Euphrates.<sup>1</sup> There came upon him that strange ineffable thrill through nerve and brain, for which the prophets of Israel could find no other expression than that "the hand of the Lord was on them," the ecstasy of one who "falls into a trance, having his eyes open" (Num. xxiv. 4); and to him, in that ecstasy, as afterwards to Stephen (Acts vii. 56), and to the Christ (Luke iii. 21), the "heavens were opened," and he saw "visions of God." The theophany seemed to him, as Jeremiah's vision had done to him (Jer. i. 13, 14), to come from the North, partly perhaps, because the expectations of men turned to that region as pregnant with the new peoples, Scythians, Medes, Persians, and the like, and the new events, which were to determine the coming history of his people (Jer. iv. 6, vi. 1); partly also,

<sup>1</sup> The river Chebar, the Chaboras of the Greek geographers, flows into the Euphrates near Kirkesion. The site of Tel-Abib is unknown. The name = "the mound or heap of corn," indicates a region of more than average fertility.

because it was associated, as in Job xxxvii. 22, with the idea of clearness and of brightness, and so with that of the "terrible majesty" of God.<sup>1</sup> And there he beheld a vision of unutterable glory, the nearest approximation to which, as a help to our powers of imagining the unimaginable, may be found in the marvellous and mysterious brightness, incandescent and irradiant, of a northern aurora. And in the luminous clouds, reminding him of what he had heard or read of the glory of the God of Israel who dwelleth between the cherubim of the mercy-seat, such as had filled the Temple on the day of its dedication (1 Kings viii. 10, 11), such as had been manifested to the eyes of Isaiah (Isa. vi. 1-4), bright as amber, and as flashing from a central fire, he beheld four mysterious forms, like, and yet unlike, to those cherubim, like in their outstretched wings and in their human features, unlike in the union with those features of the three animal forms, the presence of which seems to have hindered him from identifying the "living creatures" with the cherubim, till he saw them once again, in the Temple, as he had seen them on the banks of Chebar (Ezek. x. 20). These forms were, so to speak, a mystical and elaborate development of the figures with which he had been familiar in the old days when he had ministered in the Temple, and had seen them embroidered in the veil of the Temple (Exod. xxxvi. 8), or heard of them as bending over the mercy-seat (Exod. xxv. 15-20, xxxvii. 1-9). It may be noted that in the land of his exile Ezekiel's eyes must have become familiar with sculptured shapes which presented many points of analogy both to his earlier and later conceptions of the cherubim. The bulls with eagle's wings and human heads, the four or six wings, of which two are opened out for flight, while two cover the

<sup>1</sup> The analogy of the Eastern belief in a sacred Northern mountain, the Meru, which like the Olympus of the Greeks was thought of as the abode of gods, is perhaps too remote to be pressed, except as having possibly originated in the same phenomena.

body down to the feet, were, in Assyrian art, the symbols of strength and majesty, of the power of earthly kings, of deities like Nisroch or Nebo. It lies in the nature of all such symbols that they presuppose an existing alphabet. There must be a key to the mysterious cypher. And so, we cannot doubt, it was here. The lion was then, as it has been ever since in poetry, in fables and in heraldry, the recognized king of beasts, as the eagle is of birds. The ox was pre-eminent among the creatures that man had tamed and brought under his yoke. The human face could, of course, be symbolic of nothing but its own humanity, of thought, reason, will. Taken together, the fourfold forms, each of the four living creatures having this quadripartite face, represented the Divine attributes of Might, Wisdom, Will, as manifested in the elemental forces and life-phenomena of Nature, their movements, guided as by the promptings of a living spirit to their destined goal without error or deviation.

But this was not all. Below the living creatures, standing upon the earth, were two wheels, one within the other, intersecting each other at right angles, bright and translucent as the beryl.<sup>1</sup> What did they symbolize? To what antecedent ideas in the prophet's mind was that vision presented so that it might not seem wholly as a cypher without a key? In answering these questions let us remember that Ezekiel was in the land of the Chaldeans, and that these Chaldeans were pre-eminent for their knowledge of astronomy. As such they were much occupied, if not with cycles and epicycles like those of the Ptolemaic system of the Greek astronomers, yet at least with circles and with spheres. As they approximated to the idea of a law governing the stars in their courses, the form of a sphere, of which the intersection of two circles at right

<sup>1</sup> In the Hebrew "Tarshish" stone, which the LXX. reproduces. The Vulgate gives "*visio maris*," suggesting a colour like that of the precious stone known as the aquamarine; Luther renders it by "turquoise," De Wette and others by "chrysolite."

angles is the simplest representation, must have been frequent in their diagrams and their books. To an outsider, like the prophet, such a representation might naturally become the symbol of the thought of Law, moving in its ordered course, underlying the vital phenomena of the universe, and regulating their developments. And as contrasted with what even in modern speech we sometimes speak of as a "*blind*" chance, or with a law which though working uniformly, seemed as reckless and blind as chance itself in regard to consequences, the wheels were "full of eyes," as seeing all contingencies and contemplating all results, bright and lucent to the eye that looked on them, yet "dreadful" and awe-inspiring in their transcendent height, animated by the same spirit of life that was in the living creatures, and moving as they moved. And overarching both there was the infinite azure of the "terrible crystal" of the firmament, like "the body of heaven in its clearness" (comp. Exod. xxiv. 10), and through that crystalline vault there echoed what the poetry of later Greek thought described as "the music of the spheres," but which to the ear of Ezekiel, was as the "noise of great waters, the voice of the Almighty, the voice of words," as yet inarticulate as a guide to action, yet bringing to the inward ear the thought of the great Hallelujahs of Nature, the everlasting anthem, such as Isaiah had heard from the lips of the burning seraphim,<sup>1</sup> "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. vi. 3.)

But the vision, with all its transcendent and pregnant symbolism was not yet complete. Above the firmament and over the heads of the living creatures was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone (comp.

<sup>1</sup> The adjective gives the literal meaning of the Hebrew noun, which we find used with that meaning for the "fiery serpents" of Numbers xxi. 6. They would seem to have been thought of as transfigured and incandescent cherubim.

Exod. xxiv. 10 again), more intense in its pure azure than the vault of heaven itself, and upon the throne was the likeness of the appearance of a man above it, radiant as with the ineffable brightness of amber and of fire. Yes, in spite of the second commandment, prohibiting as it did the materializing of the thought of God in the likeness of man or beast, in metal or marble, the thoughts of the prophet could not escape from the inevitable anthropomorphism which embodies an eternal truth. Only through our thoughts of what man is in his ideal perfection can we pass to the conception of what God is. In the fullest apocalypse of the Divine Glory there must be, in the language of Browning's "Saul," "a face, like our face, that receives us," a "hand, like our hand," stretched out to guide and direct us. Our thoughts of the wisdom and the righteousness, of the sovereignty and fatherhood of God, are but transfigured analogues of our ideas of a like wisdom and sovereignty, a like righteousness and fatherhood as manifested in man. If we find that thought fully realized in the Incarnation which, as we are told, in the most metaphysical of our creeds, was not "the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but the taking of the manhood into God," not for a time only but for eternity, we may recognize in Ezekiel's anthropomorphism what was, at least, a foreshadowing of that ultimate theophany.

Nor was this all. The vision of the glory of the throne, of the sapphire, and the amber, and the fire, might have been simply overwhelming, but the appearance of the brightness round about was as "that of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain." We have read, some of us, of the thoughts which have flashed into a poet's mind as he stood by the rushing torrent of the waters of Niagara and the dark abyss into which they fell, spanned by the rainbow in its sevenfold harmony of colours, emblem, to his soul, of the eternal hope which hovers over the rush of the



world's history, and the unsolved problems in which it seems to issue. Some such thoughts that vision of the rainbow, in the midst of the fiery glory of the throne, must have brought to Ezekiel's mind. The traditions of his creed had associated it inseparably with the thought of the permanence of an order working for good, underlying all changes, however apparently catastrophic (Gen. ix. 13). At a time when the history of his own life and that of his people was so dark and gloomy, when its accumulated transgressions had brought desolation and exile as their punishment, when its life and its faith seemed wrecked for ever in the destruction of the Temple, a day of storms and gloom, of clouds and darkness, it was an unspeakable consolation to see in that "bow in the cloud as in the day of rain" the token that all was not over, that there was still, in Jeremiah's language, "a future and a hope" in store for him and for his people (Jer. xxix. 11).<sup>1</sup>

I have endeavoured to interpret the symbols of Ezekiel's vision as I believe he must himself have interpreted them. When they re-appeared, in part, and with significant variations, in the visions of St. John (Rev. iv. 8) there may have been other thoughts mingled with those which I have learnt to read in them as they appear in those of the earlier prophet. It was, perhaps, natural that a devout, but not historical, imagination should, at a later date, see in their fourfold forms the emblems of the four Evangelists, and that this association, once accepted in the traditions of Christian art, should overshadow all others, even though those traditions varied in their agreement of the several symbols, the Lion and the Man, for example, being identified, now as corresponding with St. Matthew and St. Mark, and now with St. Mark and St. Matthew respectively. With these developments, however, the interpreter of Ezekiel has

<sup>1</sup> I take this rendering, adopted now by nearly all critics, instead of the "expected end" of our Authorized Version.

simply nothing to do. It is wholly inconceivable that they could have been in his thoughts at all.

The vision, however, was not yet over. Ezekiel had been prostrate on the ground, as in adoring awe before the marvellous theophany. He is raised from that prostration partly by a voice that speaks to him, partly by the consciousness of a new spiritual power and presence within him. And the voice calls him by a name which, one might almost say, was identified with Ezekiel till it was identified yet more closely with the Christ. For him, the chief thought conveyed by that name of "the Son of Man" was as in Psalms viii. 4, cxliv. 3, the thought of the littleness of his human nature. That thought was, it is true, associated even in those very psalms with that of man's greatness as supreme, in the natural constitution and order of the world, over the creation, animate and inanimate, in the midst of which he finds himself; but as yet it had not been connected, as it was a few years afterwards, in Daniel's vision, with the exaltation of One who, though "like unto a Son of Man," was brought with clouds of glory to sit on the right hand of the Ancient of days (Dan. vii. 13). For Ezekiel the name "Son of Man" simply bore its witness that he stood on the same level with the weakest and meanest of those to whom he spoke, that it was a marvel and a mystery that such an one as he should be called to the office of a prophet of Jehovah. As with other prophets, the mission to which he was thus called was no light or easy task. He was sent to a rebellious house, "impudent children and stiff-hearted." His life among them was to be as that of one who "dwells among scorpions," and with whom are "briers and thorns." There was but little prospect of their listening to him, but he was to do his work regardless of praise or blame, whether they "would hear, or forbear" hearing. And as in the symbolic language of his contemporary Jeremiah, he was to make

the message which it was given him to utter his own; by incorporating it with his very life of life; he was "to eat that which was given him," and a hand was sent unto him and in the hand there was as the roll of a book—not perhaps without a reminiscence of the volume that had been found in the Temple in the days of Josiah (2 Chron. xxxiv. 14), or Jeremiah's roll under Jehoiakim (Jer. xxxvi. 4, 32). A glance at it shewed its nature. It was written on both sides, within and without, and from first to last it seemed as if there were no word of hope or promise, nothing but "lamentations, and mourning, and woe." But it does not lie with a true prophet to choose his message. His work is to "eat what he finds," and so in simple obedience Ezekiel does as he was told to do. And then there came, as in an acted parable, one of the strange paradoxes of a prophet's work. The book so full of woe that it might have been expected to find its analogue in the bitterness of gall and wormwood, was found to be in his mouth "as honey for sweetness." In part, as we have already seen, he was echoing the language, and repeating the experience of Jeremiah (Jer. xv. 16). In part he was reproducing what had been said by the writer of the nineteenth Psalm of the judgments of Jehovah, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." Underlying all three utterances, there was the truth to which the spiritual experience of the ages adds an ever-clearer testimony, that there is an ineffable sweetness and joy in that sense of being in communion and fellowship with God which is the groundwork of a prophet's calling. That sweetness may, as in the parallel symbolism of the Apocalypse, pass into bitterness (Rev. x. 9), as the seer encounters the inevitable pain of being a minister of condemnation as well as deliverance, of death as well as life; or, as in the case of Ezekiel, it may follow on the mourning and the

woe which he sees to be inseparable from his task; but for the time there is a new consciousness of a higher life, the sense of a supreme rest and calm, underlying the world's endless agitation, and of a Divine compassion working through the sternest judgments. With Ezekiel, as we have seen, the sweetness came as an unlooked-for joy. But it came also to strengthen him for the trials that were inseparable from his work, and to prepare him for his mission to that house of Israel which was as the very incarnation of the spirit of rebellion, "impudent and hard-hearted." He was to look for conflict and antagonism. His forehead was to be "strong against their foreheads," strong as "an adamant," harder than flint. To preach to those who had received the truth, and who knew the law of their God, while they resisted and disobeyed it, was a harder task than if he had been sent to the heathen "of a strange speech and a hard language." In words which remind us of the Gospel-woes upon Chorazin and Bethsaida (Matt. xi. 21), he is told that had he been sent to them they would have hearkened unto him (Ezek. iii. 6), but that the house of Israel would be deaf to his teaching, as they had been deaf to that of God. In spite of that knowledge, however, he was bidden to do his work as before, "whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear." That was to be, as it were, his motto and his watchword, as it has been that of every true prophet before and after him.

And now the wondrous vision which then called him to his office as a prophet was all but over. But before it closed there came another moment as of intensest ecstasy. Whether "in the body or out of the body" he could not tell, but it was as though the Spirit took him up, and once more there was "the noise of the wings of the living creatures, and the noise of the wheels and a noise of a great rushing." The "rush," so to speak, of the forces

and the laws that were working in Nature and in history went on as before in their mighty and complex course. But behind them he now heard what he had not heard before, a doxology like that which Isaiah had heard from the seraphim of his Temple-vision (Isa. vi. 3), "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place" (Ezek. iii. 12). The noise, it is emphatically noted, is heard *behind* him. Either, that is, he had already turned his face from the glory of the vision in the North, as preparing to go upon the mission to which he had been sent, or still gazing northward, he heard from the South, for him the region of Jerusalem, the witness that the glory of the Lord had not yet departed from the sanctuary, the "place" which Jehovah had chosen, and in which the prophet had so often worshipped Him. Each view has its supporters among interpreters of the first order, Keil and Delitzsch and Hengstenberg maintaining the former, Ewald the latter. On the whole I incline to side with Ewald. What the prophet needed was the assurance, like that which came to Jacob in his wanderings (Gen. xxviii. 17), that the glory of the Lord, though the Temple was the chosen and central seat of its manifestation, was yet not limited to the Temple; that everywhere, by the waters of Chebar as in the sanctuary of Jerusalem, there might be granted to the inward eye that which made the spot where it was given as "the house of God and as the gate of Heaven." The cherubim of that sanctuary blended, as it were, the voice of benediction and of praise with the noise of the wings and of the wheels, and so bore their witness to the prophet's soul, as a like doxology did to St. John in Patmos (Rev. iv. 8), that the glory of Jehovah was bounded by no place-limits, but could manifest itself to the vision of the seer everywhere throughout the world, when and how it would.

And so the prophet turned from the river-bank which was thus made for ever memorable in his own life, and

in the history of the Church of God, to enter on his task, and bent his footsteps to his own home. What befell him there, in what respect his mode of teaching was like or unlike to that of his great contemporary and his yet greater predecessor, will be the subject of my next paper.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

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### BIOGENESIS AND DEGENERATION.

A VERY clever and well written book has recently appeared which has rapidly won a wide reputation.<sup>1</sup> No doubt it owes much of its success to a generous review in *The Spectator*—which is always generous when it praises; but no one can well read it without admitting that it thoroughly deserves the success which, but for that generous aid, it might have only more slowly commanded. Its author Mr. Henry Drummond, is at once a Professor of Natural Science and a Preacher of the Gospel; and in an ingenuous Preface he tells us how, to his great surprise, he found the two main spheres of thought through which he moves overlapping and interpenetrating each other. From the days of Bishop Butler downwards, many English divines have traced the most striking and instructive analogies between the natural and the spiritual worlds; but Mr. Drummond, not content with indicating analogies and resemblances, has been moved to essay the much bolder adventure of proving the identity of these worlds, by shewing that the same laws run and hold in both. And if he has not altogether succeeded in this bold adventure—and a complete success was hardly to be expected by the first that sailed into that unknown sea, he has at least done something to prepare the way for those who will come after him.

*Natural Law in the Spiritual World.* By Henry Drummond, F.R.S.E., F.G.S. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

But we need not, nor is it our intention to, repeat the praise which has been already lavished on this remarkable book. Mr. Drummond himself will feel that we are paying him a higher compliment if we indicate one or two points of grave moment, and at least one entire line of thought, on which we differ from him, and shew reason why he should reconsider them.

The line of thought we are about to call in question is worked out mainly in the first and second chapters of his work, which are headed respectively by the words *Biogenesis* and *Degeneration*.

In the first Mr. Drummond takes up the dictum of Science, that life can only spring from life, and shews that this law holds good in the spiritual no less than in the natural world. Time was when men of science, and even eminent men of science, held the theory of spontaneous generation—held, *i.e.* that life is capable of springing into being of itself, of being educed or evolved from that which is without life. And this theory was very welcome to the fanatical believers in Evolution, who reject the very thought of miracle, of supernatural intervention, of the presence, activity, nay, of the very existence of God. It is to the credit of this scientific school, therefore, that they have themselves conducted the experiments which disproved the theory of spontaneous generation; and that such men as Virchow, Huxley, Tyndall, have been foremost in proclaiming that life cannot be evolved from things without life, that it can only spring from a pre-existent life.

After glancing at the experiments by which this theory has been exploded and finally dismissed from the realm of Science, Mr. Drummond proceeds to argue thus. In the *religious*, as in the scientific, world there have been and are advocates and defenders of the theory of spontaneous generation, and advocates and defenders of biogenesis: that is to say, there are those who maintain that *spiritual* life may be

developed, by a natural force or process, in those who are spiritually dead ; and, on the other hand, there are those who maintain that this life can only be imparted by a pre-existing Life, that it must in all cases be the gift of a living and quickening Spirit. The one class affirm that a natural man may gradually become better and better, grow more and more virtuous, until he becomes a spiritual man ; that he is not dependent on any spiritual energy or force outside of or above himself, that he enters into life by a normal and appropriate development of his native and inherent powers. The other class affirm, on the contrary, that the spiritual man is no mere development of the natural man ; that he is and must be a new creature, born from above ; that he truly lives only as he is regenerated by the Spirit of God. And of the two, no careful reader of the New Testament will deny that the advocates of Regeneration have its full authority on their side.

Science, then, at least by its wiser representatives, declares that life springs only from life : this is the law of Biogenesis. Religion, at least by its wiser representatives, also declares that life springs only from life : this is the doctrine of Regeneration. The religious doctrine is, therefore, only a specific application of the universal law. As Science asserts that there can be no life which does not spring from life, so Religion asserts that spiritual life can spring only from the touch of a Life already spiritual. It must be born, or begotten, from above ; born, or begotten, of the Spirit.

But the advocates of this doctrine of Regeneration, this law of Biogenesis in the spiritual world, have heretofore been compelled, says Mr. Drummond, to rely solely on the authority of Revelation, on certain texts in the Bible. In their conflict with those who maintain that Virtue may *grow* into Religion apart from the quickening touch of the Divine Spirit, they could produce no argument from Nature



or Experience, no argument, therefore, that would avail them with those who do not defer to the authority of texts, or who read them in a different sense. This missing link he holds himself to have supplied in the argument that, as there can be no spontaneous generation of natural life, so also there can be no spontaneous generation of spiritual life.

Nor is he content with this general analogy, this general argument, from Nature. He goes on to define it and give it force by an illustration which plausible as it is, and in some measure true, nevertheless in our judgment really weakens its force and exposes it to the gravest objections. Science, he says, divides the world of Nature into two great kingdoms, the organic and the inorganic. And in affirming the law of Biogenesis, it affirms that the inorganic kingdom is separated from the organic by a gulf which cannot be crossed—at least from the inferior side; that the passage from the mineral to the vegetable or animal kingdom is absolutely and for ever closed—at least to the mineral. "No change of substance, no modification of environment, no chemistry, no electricity, nor any form of energy, nor any evolution can endow any single atom of the mineral world with the attribute of life. Only by the bending down into this dead world of some living form can these dead atoms be gifted with . . . vitality. Without this preliminary contact with life, they remain fixed in the inorganic sphere for ever."<sup>1</sup> There is a similar gulf in the human world, between the natural man and the spiritual man. The passage from the natural to the spiritual is

<sup>1</sup> Goethe had considered this, as so many other points, as we learn from the Eckermann *Conversations* (p. 521, Eng. Trans.). The efforts of certain inquirers into nature who, to penetrate the organic world, would ascend through mineralogy, having been mentioned, Goethe replied: "This is a great mistake. In the mineralogical world the simplest, in the organic world the most complex, is the most excellent. We see, too, that these two worlds have quite different tendencies, and that a *stepwise progress from one to the other is by no means to be found.*"

absolutely and for ever closed—on the natural side at least. Just as “the door from the inorganic to the organic is shut, and no mineral can open it, so the door from the natural to the spiritual is shut, and no man can open it. This world of natural men is staked off from the spiritual world by barriers which have never yet been crossed from within. No organic change, no modification of environment, no mental energy, no moral effort, no evolution of character, no progress of civilization can endow any single human soul with the attribute of spiritual life. The spiritual world is guarded from the world next in order beneath it by a law of Biogenesis: *Except a man be born again . . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*”

And here it is to be observed that our Lord does not say that, if a man be not renewed in the spirit of his mind, he *will not*, but that he *cannot* enter the Kingdom. “For the exclusion of the spiritually inorganic from the Kingdom of the spiritually organic is not arbitrary. Nor is the natural man refused admission on unexplained grounds. His admission is a scientific impossibility. Except a mineral be ‘born from above’—from the kingdom just above it—it cannot enter the kingdom just above it. And except a man be ‘born from above,’ by the same law he cannot enter the kingdom just above him. There being no passage from one kingdom to another, whether from inorganic to organic, or from natural to spiritual, the intervention of life is a scientific necessity if a stone, or a plant, or an animal, or a man is to pass from a lower to a higher sphere. The plant stretches down to the dead world beneath it, touches its minerals and gases with its mystery of life, and brings them up ennobled and transformed to the living sphere. The breath of God, blowing where it listeth, touches with its mystery of life the dead souls of men, bears them across the bridgeless gulf between the natural and the spiritual, be-

tween the spiritually inorganic and the spiritually organic, endows them with its own high qualities, and develops within them the new and secret faculties by which those who are born again are said to *see the kingdom of God.*"

Now that surely is a striking and very impressive analogy. It is, perhaps, something more than an analogy. At least it gives us a hint of the *identity* of the natural and spiritual worlds, and helps us to understand Carlyle's favourite axiom, "The natural *is* the supernatural." For it is clear that a remarkable and significant harmony exists at this point "between the organic world as arranged by Science and the spiritual world as arranged by Scripture. We find one law guarding the threshold of both worlds, securing that entrance from a lower sphere shall only take place by a direct regenerating act, emanating from the world next in order above. There are not two laws of Biogenesis, one for the natural the other for the spiritual: one law is for both." *Wherever* there is life, it springs from previously existing life. And to find a law which runs in two worlds is to gain at least a presumption that these two worlds are at the bottom one.

For this extension of the law of Biogenesis, this identification of it with the law of Regeneration, we are indebted to Mr. Drummond, and the debt is one to be gratefully acknowledged. But our gratitude should not be blind. And, in our judgment, it would be blind if it led us to overlook the objections to which his exposition of this law, especially on the religious side, fairly lies open. His interpretation of the doctrine of Regeneration as taught by our Lord Jesus in his conversation with Nicodemus, for example, leaves much to be desired. It is open to many objections on which our present purpose does not allow us to enter at the length they require and deserve. But, in passing, we may suggest that Bishop Butler's weighty definition of Regeneration, as "not a change of nature, but

a change *in* nature," accords much more nearly than Mr. Drummond's with the general teaching of both Scripture and Experience. We would remind him that He who said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," also said, "Except your *righteousness* exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven," and suggest that if natural virtue, or righteousness, will not of itself grow and develop into spiritual life, it is yet the best preparation for the renewing grace of God, and the condition most likely to secure the quickening influence of the Spirit. We would ask, If men are blind in the sense in which he pronounces them blind, and dead in the sense in which he affirms them to be dead—utterly unable, *i.e.* to see or stir or move, to what end, except to mock their helplessness and misery, does the gospel of the grace of God summon them to awake and arise, that Christ may give them both life and light? And we cannot but express our astonishment that any good man should calmly assume that he is a being of a higher quality, another order, to the great majority of his fellows, even the most virtuous of them; that he is endowed with a mystic life so superior to any which they possess as to place him in another sphere, in a world as high above theirs as the organic kingdom of nature towers above the inorganic, so that, compared with him, they are mere earths and gases. Such very superior persons are in no small danger, one should think, of sinking into Pharisees, and thanking God that they are not as other men ("the rest," "the refuse," of humanity)—the one only class whom our Lord allowed Himself to denounce as "hypocrites," as having a name to live while yet they were dead.

But these are points on which we can only touch and pass by, for a point of even graver moment awaits decision. Had Mr. Drummond been content to prove that the law of Biogenesis runs and holds in the spiritual as well as in the

natural world ; that here, too, life can only spring into being at the touch of Life ; that men must be born again, and can only be raised into a higher sphere of being by the quickening influence of God's Spirit—that Divine Spirit acting immediately on their spirits, or passing to them through the nurture and training they receive from the already quickened spirits of their fellow-men—we should have nothing for him but thanks and praise. For who that knows himself does not know that he cannot depend on himself, or on his brother men, for the life and salvation of his soul ? Who does not know and feel that he cannot in his own strength shake off the clinging curse of sin, cannot rise unaided into the holiness without which no man can see the Lord, but must be redeemed, quickened, and sustained by Him who alone has life in Himself, but who can impart that life in a thousand different ways—alluring us to goodness by our natural virtues and affections or the nurture and admonition of the home, driving us from evil by the stripes which scourge us for our sins, aiding us by his grace in our struggles with our besetting infirmities, speaking to us from and through his Word, meeting and blessing us in every sincere act of worship, opening the eye of faith on the sacred realities and sevenfold splendours of the world invisible, manifesting a love which awakens musical responses of love within our souls, and infusing into our hearts the courage and patience of hope. In all things we hang on God. In Him we live and move and have our being. Apart from Him we have nothing, are nothing.

No assertion of our dependence on God, for life, and breath, and all things, can be too absolute. But when, not content with asserting our absolute dependence on Him who is the Life indeed, Mr. Drummond proceeds to compare the natural man to the inorganic world and the spiritual man to the organic ; when he sinks between them a gulf wholly

impassable from the lower side, impassable even, if his illustration holds, to the voice of prayer and aspiration, and *to draw out the consequences* of that separation between the two, he passes into a region in which we can no longer follow him, and ruins his analogy by overdriving it. For one logical and direct consequence of his argument is, that for the vast majority of men there is no hope nor chance of life. They cannot rise into it by any effort of their own any more than a crystal or a gas can become a plant by any effort of its own. They can only wait, helpless, and impotent even of desire, till the Spirit of God stoops down, and by his gracious touch quickens in them the life of the soul. And as, up at least to this period in the history of man, the vast majority of the race have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost, much less felt and consciously responded to his quickening influence, it follows, as the night the day, that there can be no hope for them.

Nor does Mr. Drummond shrink even from this appalling consequence of his argument. He frankly accepts it, and even sets himself, as we shall soon see, to vindicate it as just. He says (pp. 410-12): "The broad impression gathered from the utterances of the Founder of the spiritual kingdom is that the number of organisms to be included in it is comparatively small. The outstanding characteristic of the new Society is to be its selectness. 'Many are called,' said Christ, 'but few are chosen.' . . . The analogy of Nature upon this point is not less striking—it may be added, not less solemn. It is an open secret, to be read in a hundred analogies from the world around us, that of the millions of possible entrants for advancement in any department of Nature, the number ultimately selected for preferment is small. Here also 'many are called, and few are chosen.' The analogies from the waste of seed, of pollen, of human lives, are too familiar to be quoted. But

there are other analogies, wider and more just, which strike deeper into the system of Nature. A comprehensive view of the whole field of Nature discloses the fact that the circle of the chosen slowly contracts as we rise in the scale of being. Some mineral, but not all, becomes vegetable; some vegetable, but not all, becomes animal; some animal, but not all, becomes human; some human, but not all, becomes Divine. Thus the area narrows. At the base is the mineral, most broad and simple; the spiritual at the apex, smallest, but most highly differentiated. So form rises above form, kingdom above kingdom. *Quantity decreases as quality increases."*

This, then, is the dainty high-polite way in which Science, even when it has clothed itself with Religion, calmly informs us that the vast majority of us are to be damned, or, at least, "cast as rubbish to the void," veiling the horror of its conclusion from itself in these refined and elaborate circumlocutions, speaking with a cool precision and taking a lofty argumentative tone which at first well nigh paralyses the very faculty of remonstrance within us, or tempts us, if we be of a hotter temperament, to break out into savage anathemas against the selfish but "highly differentiated" few who sit on the apex of felicity smiling at the many who meet their helpless doom at its base.

And yet, when we come to weigh and test the argument, what is it worth? Take, first, the analogy from Nature. Is the mineral to be condemned to an endless loss and shame and misery because it never becomes a plant, although it never could become a plant, since no member of the vegetable kingdom graciously stooped down to it, and by the mystic touch of its life kindled life in the inorganic mass? And if not, why is man, or the vast majority of men, to be condemned to that fearful doom because they never responded to a quickening touch which was never vouchsafed them? For, according to the theory before us,

there is *nothing* inorganic, there is no gas or mineral, which, if duly prepared and touched from above, must not rise into the higher life of the vegetable kingdom; and none which *can* rise into that life unless it be duly prepared and touched. And if we are to take the analogy at all, we must take it altogether, and argue that there is nothing human which may not—nay, which must not—become Divine, no natural man who must not become a spiritual man, if only he be quickened by the Spirit of God; while, on the other hand, no such man can possibly become alive unto God if that gracious quickening touch be withheld. Who, then, is to blame if the natural man remain a natural man to the end? Are we to blame *him* for not becoming what, ex-hypothesi, he could no more become than a crystal could change itself into a plant? If any one is to be blamed, are we not driven by this very argument to cast the whole responsibility of his doom on the Spirit who alone could have raised him to life, and yet did not do it?

Obviously, the very moment we put the argument to the proof, it breaks down: for when can a religious argument be said to break down if not when it leads us straight to the unpardonable sin of speaking against the Holy Ghost?

The simple fact is that, for all definite and authoritative teaching on the destiny of man; if we would know whether or not it be the purpose of Almighty God that all his offspring should be ultimately recovered to the noblest and highest kind of life of which they are capable, we must go, not to Nature, but to the Word in which He has revealed the counsels of his will—as, indeed, we do not doubt that Mr. Drummond himself would freely admit. He does go to Scripture, as we have seen; but most of us have also gone to Scripture for ourselves for the solution of this grave problem, and know what it teaches, know, therefore, where his argument is weak. It is weak in that it relies, not on the whole teaching of Him who brought life and immortality



to life, but only on a fraction of it. In the passage we have just cited from his work, he bases himself on the single saying of our Lord, "Many are called, but few are chosen," and even this saying he does not seem to have adequately studied in its connection. Suppose he had started with our Lord's express declaration that, in the sight of God our Father, men are of more value than many sparrows—might not that have thrown some doubt on his inference from the fate of minerals and gases, which are of much less value than the sparrow? Had he gone on to such conspicuous and beloved parables as that of the Shepherd seeking his one lost sheep, although he had ninety and nine safe in the fold, and not desisting from the quest until he had found it—might he not have been led to question whether, when men are concerned, God is indifferent to quantity so that He has quality, and "wastes" them as He "wastes" seed and pollen? Had he marked how the teaching of the parable of the Shepherd is confirmed by that of the Woman seeking her one lost coin, also until she found it,<sup>1</sup> although she had the nine safe in her pocket or her chest; and that of the Father drawing back his prodigal son by the memory of past love, only to lavish upon him a love still more tender and bountiful, although his only other son was always with him and always kept his commandments—would *these* have lent any sanction to his dainty but pitiless euphemisms that "the circle of the chosen contracts as we rise in the scale of being," or that "the outstanding characteristic of the new Society is its selectness," or that "the broad impression gathered from the utterances of the Founder of the spiritual kingdom is that the number of organisms to be included in it is comparatively small"? And had he gone on to study such sayings as these, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw *all men* unto me," "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour

<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of remark that in neither of these Parables does the Speaker add to "until he find it"—"or until he find that he cannot find it."

of *the world*," "God our Saviour wills that *all men* should be saved," and, most appropriate of all, "To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord *both of the dead and of the living*"—would he not have found it impossible to pen the sentences we have just quoted? might not his doubt have grown upon him until he felt his conclusion to be wholly untenable?

Nature *may* rise in narrowing circles, and care so much for quality as to disregard quantity, and suffer the great mass of her works to perish without attaining the highest life of which they are capable. But if she does—and we doubt it, for surely we have heard from the lips of Science herself that Nature suffers nothing to be lost, but by some secret alchemy converts even things most vile to beneficent and noble uses; but if she does—all we can say is that she belies her Lord and Maker and ours. For, and we have his word for it, *He* wills that no man should perish but that all should live. If she does, moreover, why should we listen to her voice when we have a more clear and a more sure word of testimony to which we may go, even the Word of eternal life? What that Word really teaches on the point in dispute is not to be proved by a few isolated texts, whether the texts Mr. Drummond quotes, or the much larger array which we have quoted. Nor are we at all anxious to urge our own solution of this grave problem, or in any way to forestall the judgment of our readers upon it and the result of their own independent research. All we contend for here is that we *must* go, each for himself, to the Word of God, and not to the analogies of Nature, for our conviction as to what the final destiny of the human race is to be; and that if we have gone to it and studied it for ourselves, there is nothing in Mr. Drummond's argument, able as it is and formidable as it seems, to shake us from the conviction we have reached.

But we may be sure that a man of his mark has not reached so unwelcome and appalling a conclusion as this, without having something to say for it which demands and will repay our best attention. Accordingly we find that in the Chapter which follows his discussion of the law of Biogenesis, he sets himself to vindicate his conclusion, to shew the justice of the doom which he believes to await the majority of the human race.

The heading of this chapter is *Degeneration*, and here he discusses the principle of Reversion to Type. A few words will suffice to indicate the main line of his argument—all the fewer because in a paper which appeared only last month, the Editor of this Magazine dwelt on the true application of this principle to the conduct and fate of men at some length.<sup>1</sup> The argument runs thus. Every creature that has life, and the energies and faculties of life, tends, if it neglect to use and train those faculties, to degenerate towards a lower form of being. Every flower and shrub in our gardens, for example, if it be neglected, deteriorates, and sinks toward the type from which it originally sprang—the rose into the dog-rose, the geranium into the cranesbill; and the more cultivated and complex and beautiful they are the more rapidly do they degenerate. The same law holds good of every variety of pigeon in our dovecotes, and indeed of every animal we have pressed into our service, and the strain of which we have cultivated and improved. Nor does the law cease to operate when we rise to man. Here, too, neglect means degeneration. If he neglect his body, he sinks toward physical disease and death; if he neglect his mind, he sinks toward idiocy and madness; if he neglect his conscience, it runs off into lawlessness and vice. And, in like manner, if a community of men, a nation, neglects its proper culture, wastes its best opportunities, breaks into division against itself, devotes

<sup>1</sup> See "The Sluggard's Garden." Vol. vi. pp. 401-416.

itself mainly, if not exclusively, to conquest, pleasure, or the acquisition of wealth, it sinks in the scale, becomes violent, sensual, sordid and grasping—decays and decays till it is ripe for destruction.

Of this general law of Degeneration Mr. Drummond gives two illustrations from the natural world on which he lays special stress. "There are," he says, "certain burrowing animals—the mole, for instance—which have taken to spending their lives beneath the surface of the ground. And Nature has taken her revenge upon them in a thoroughly natural way—she has closed up their eyes. If they mean to live in darkness, she argues, eyes are obviously a superfluous function. By neglecting them these animals make it clear that they do not want them. And as one of Nature's fixed principles is that nothing shall exist in vain, the eyes are presently taken away or reduced to a rudimentary state."

And again: "When one examines the little *Crustacea* which have inhabited for centuries the lakes of the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, one is at first astonished to find these animals apparently endowed with perfect eyes. The pallor of the head is broken by two black pigment specks, conspicuous, indeed, as the only bits of colour on the whole blanched body; and these, even to the casual observer, certainly represent well defined organs of vision. But what do they with eyes in these Stygian waters? *There* reigns an everlasting night. Is the law for once at fault? A swift incision with the scalpel, a glance with a lens, and their secret is betrayed. The eyes are a mockery. Externally, they are organs of vision—the front of the eye is perfect; behind, there is nothing but a mass of ruins. The optic nerve is a shrunken, atrophied, and insensate thread. These animals have organs of vision, and yet they have no vision. They have eyes, but see not." . . . They "have chosen to abide in darkness, therefore they have

become fitted for it. By refusing to see, they have waived the right to see. And Nature has grimly humoured them. Nature had to do it by her very constitution. It is her defence against waste that decay of faculty should immediately follow disuse of function."

With these two capital illustrations Mr. Drummond strengthens his charge against man, and vindicates the judgment of God. And it cannot be denied that from the law of Degeneration, thus illustrated and lit up, he has drawn a very solemn and impressive warning against the abuse, or even the neglect, of any of the faculties which God has given us. While, if his argument be a sound one, if it be true that the majority of men are simply deprived of faculties which they have declined to use, and the possession of which would only unfit them for the condition into which they have fallen, it must also be admitted that he goes far to vindicate the doom which he believes the all-wise Judge will pronounce upon them.

Yet, once more, before we accept his conclusion, let us examine his argument, and see how it hangs together, and whether it will bear the strain he puts upon it.

And surely the first thing that will strike any thoughtful man who brings an open mind to this examination will be, that between these two chapters on *Biogenesis* and *Degeneration*, Mr. Drummond silently and, without a word of warning, wholly shifts his ground; and not only so, but that in the second he pursues a line of argument which flatly contradicts that which he pursued in the first. In the first, the natural man was compared to the *inorganic* kingdom of Nature; and it was argued that just as no member of that kingdom—no mineral, no gas—could live unless it were touched, quickened, transformed by some gracious vital influence from the kingdom above it, so the dead natural man could only be raised to spiritual life as he was touched, quickened, and transformed by a gracious and

vital Power from the Kingdom above him—as he was born again, born of the Spirit. Impotent and helpless, he could only wait until, if ever, the mystic touch, the quickening breath, descended upon him. And as, up to this time at least, the vast majority of the human race have not felt that touch, the inference was inevitable that for them there was no chance nor hope of life. But, now, lest it should seem unjust to doom them to an eternal death for not having responded to a quickening influence which was never vouchsafed them, Mr. Drummond proceeds to justify their doom by the law of Degeneration. Yet the inorganic world does not degenerate because it does not, or in so far as it does not, become organic. No mineral, no gas, reverts to a lower type, or sinks in the scale of being, because it is not raised or changed into a plant. It remains a mineral of the same structure and value, a gas charged with the same potencies. The old circle of analogies, therefore, would not serve his turn. And so, in his second chapter, and to justify the conclusion of the first, he quietly passes away from his old ground, takes up a wholly new set of analogies, and compares the natural man—no longer to inorganic minerals and gases, but to the most highly organized creatures, such as the flowers in our gardens, the birds in our dove-cotes, or the quadrupeds which we have domesticated and enlisted in our service. In the first chapter, we were all on the wrong or lower side of the yawning impassable gulf; but, as we open the second, we find ourselves, without a word to prepare us for so great a change, transported as by an act of magic to the right or higher side of the gulf! *There* we were all dead; *here*, with no resurrection to account for it, we are all alive! There, we were treated as impotent and helpless, without any spark of life; here, we are charged with having neglected our opportunities, wasted our powers, and flung our life away, or suffered it to “fast in us unused.” President Lincoln has taught

us that it is not wise to "swop horses in the middle of a stream;" but who will tell us what we are to think either of the wisdom or the fairness of a logician who secretly shuffles his fundamental premises in the middle of an argument? Does it not look as if he were so bent, if not on proving his indictment against man, at least on snatching a verdict against him, as to be a little indifferent to the means he employs for that end?

Assuredly that impression is not weakened when we mark that, even after he has shifted his natural man from the inorganic kingdom of Nature to the organic, Mr. Drummond cannot rely on the broad and general indications of this higher kingdom, but has to narrow in his view in the strangest way, and to select his evidence with a care which of itself might have led him to doubt its worth. For, as we have seen, he does not cite into court (with two exceptions, which we will examine in a moment) the trees which grow in every forest, or the animals which roam through their shade, or the flowers which spring in every field and hedgerow; but the trees of the orchard, grafted by the hand of man, "voluptuous garden roses" and highly differentiated geraniums which have elaborately responded to the gardener's skilful touch, and the animals which man has bred into new and specialized strains and made in large measure dependent on himself. The trees of the forest, which are not less noble, though they are more numerous, than those of the orchard; the wild flowers, which every artist holds to be far more beautiful than the proud and perfumed beauties of our hothouse harems; and the wild beasts, which all the world admit to be at least as strong and comely as those which men have domesticated and "improved"—all these, to which surely any sound and fair reasoner would have turned for evidence, would not have yielded the evidence Mr. Drummond desired; for *they* do not degenerate if left to themselves, but rather, if there be any truth in the

scientific axiom on the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence, develop into new strength and beauty. The organic world does not, *as a rule*, tend to revert to a lower type; and hence Mr. Drummond has to turn to a selected corner of it for the testimony he requires, and to collect his illustrations from the fate of the cultivated and complex plants and animals which man has coerced into his service, not without thereby rendering them more delicate and susceptible than they were, and more dependent on a care above their own. These, indeed, lend some colour to his forebodings of the doom of man, and so these alone are brought forward; and from the fate of *the few* in the organic kingdom Mr. Drummond ventures to infer that of *the many* in the human world.

And yet, do even these, when duly considered, really sustain his argument? Do they not rather turn round and testify against it? Beyond all doubt, our garden roses, our pigeons, our sheep and cattle, our dogs and horses, tend to revert to their original, and perhaps also to lower, types, if they are neglected. But neglected—*by whom?* By themselves, or by a being higher than themselves? It is not by self-neglect, but by the neglect of man, that they degenerate, if they do degenerate. The inference is obvious. And yet Mr. Drummond would shrink with horror from fairly working out his own analogy, and arguing that if man sinks toward a lower type, it is not because he neglects himself, but because he is neglected by a Being higher than himself, a Being whom in such a connection of thought we do not care to name.

But two of his illustrations *are* taken from the purely natural world—the world as left to itself and untouched by man, that of the mole and that of the blind fishes in the Mammoth Cave. These, therefore, we must examine with closer care.

The mole is not a domesticated animal. It is not by the



training or interference of man that it has learned to burrow and seek its food below the surface of the earth. And hence it may seem that here at least Mr. Drummond has Nature on his side. But has he? I am not a palæontologist, and I cannot therefore say whether the fossils yield any evidence in favour of his assumption that the mole was meant to live, or that he and his like ever had the power of living, above the surface of the ground, that it has "taken" to live below the surface; and that, as the due reward of its base love of darkness, it has lost the faculty of vision. I am not even naturalist enough to know whether or not the mole is really blind; but I observe that a well-known naturalist, in an essay on the mole contributed to one of the magazines for last month, asserts that this "dark gentleman in a velvet cloak," so far from being "all dark," has, when he comes to the surface, a sufficient power of sight to enable him to select and shape his course.<sup>1</sup> But whether or not the mole be blind, it is beyond all doubt that, not by its sunken eye alone, but by the whole structure of its frame, and, above all, by the structure and enormous muscular power of its fore-feet, it is exquisitely adapted to the conditions in which it lives, and for the useful function which it subserves. Many a broad acre which now bears a valuable harvest would be barren, were not the mole driven, by a hunger so voracious that he must satisfy it every three or four hours or die, to an incessant quest for the grubs and wireworms that would else eat up the springing crops by the root. If, therefore, we regard him fairly, with an eye which embraces his function and the whole series of his structural adaptations to that function, we may well believe, not that the mole by some degenerate bias of his blood has "taken" to burrow beneath the soil, or that he has chosen to live in darkness and lost his eyes by neglecting them, but that he was from the first intended

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. G. Wood, in *Longman's Magazine* for December, 1883.

by his Maker for the conditions in which we find him, and that in doing his useful work he is obeying his Maker's will. Or, to use a more scientific terminology, we may say, that by structure and function Nature seems to have ordained from the beginning that the mole should burrow in the dark. And if that be so, what becomes of all Mr. Drummond's figurative language about Nature "grimly humouring" its love of darkness, and "taking her revenge" on a creature which shewed that it did not want eyes, by closing or removing them? Is Nature—or, as "Nature is but the name of an effect whose cause is God"—is God so unjust as first to ordain one of his creatures to live and work in the dark, and then to condemn and punish him for submitting to an ordinance he could not resist?

Be that as it may, even for the sake of his argument, Mr. Drummond would not affirm that the moles of the present generation, or of countless generations back, are responsible for the deprivation under which they suffer, if it be a deprivation. They are simply what they were born. With them structure and instinct are both hereditary. It is not *they* who "took" to burrowing under ground, but their forefathers, or perhaps some great and common forefather of them all. Would it be just, then, to condemn *them* to an eternal and uncompensated loss, and, much more, to condemn them to an everlasting torture and shame, because they are simply what their ancestor or ancestors made them, *i.e.* because they are what they must be? And if not, how should it be just to condemn men purely for the very same fault?

That men suffer for the sins of their fathers, that we all inherit a certain bias toward evil from the first father of us all, is affirmed by Reason and Experience no less than by Holy Writ, though even that very suffering *may be* disciplinary and remedial. But does Reason pronounce it just that men should die everlastingly for the sin of their

fathers, whether of the third or fourth generation back or the thirtieth and fortieth? Does Holy Writ really affirm, despite the sound of certain familiar but isolated texts and the use that has been made of them, that we must all die, and die for ever, because of Adam's transgression? On the contrary, in a thousand different ways and by the whole spirit of its teaching, it affirms that every man shall be judged according to his own deeds, whether good or bad, and answer for himself alone to the great Master before whom we must all stand or fall, but who is in very deed able to make us stand. It meets the old godless and inveterate tradition, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge," with the flat contradiction, "The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die. The son shall *not* bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon *him*, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon *him*!" Nay, rising high above the rigours of strict law, it adds the merciful assurance, "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die: all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not (so much as) be mentioned unto him; for his righteousness that he hath done he shall live."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Drummond's second illustration, that of the *Crustacea* in the Mammoth Cave, is even more inapt for his purpose than that of the mole, and may be more completely turned against him; for while it is open to all the objections of the former illustration, and to the same reply, it is exposed to objections and retorts peculiar to itself. Nevertheless we cannot regret that he has used it. For we are glad to have an opportunity at last of saying a good word for these

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel xviii. 20-22. The whole chapter is nothing else than an eloquent and heart-piercing application of the truth contained in these words.

innocent, though much blamed, fellow-creatures. We have long felt a profound sympathy and pity for them. The eye of the moralist seems to be for ever upon them, and his frown. With their poor blanched bodies and sightless eyeballs—in themselves, one should think, an appeal for gentleness and compassion—they are always being held up as a terrible example, as a warning that the ways of transgressors are hard. Even Mr. Drummond speaks of them as having “*chosen* to abide in darkness” and as becoming fitted to the lot they have so basely chosen, and hurls against them the reproach that “by *refusing* to see, they have waived the right” and lost the power to see, although, as a man of science and a logician he should know that these are mere figures of rhetoric, and that, save in these misleading rhetorical figures, the unhappy denizens of the Kentucky cave lend no support to his argument. For the fish which now inhabit those dark lakes did *not* choose their lot. They were born and bred to it, and could no more escape it than the Ethiopian can change his skin. They, too, are suffering for the sins of their fathers—if at least their fathers were guilty of the base choice attributed to them. But were they? On the contrary, they were carried into darkness by forces which it was impossible for them to resist. The very catastrophe or convulsion of Nature which sank those lakes so deep swept *them* into the dark abyss, or the very laws by which this Cave were formed conducted them into it. That they have cheerfully adapted themselves to so cruel a fate, that they contrive to live under it and make the best of it, should win for them our sympathy and respect rather than bring on them our condemnation. How can we blame them for not having resisted forces which they could not resist? To condemn them for submitting to conditions which they did not select, to hold them up as sinners above all other fish in the American waters, is simply to add our insult to the injury

of Nature. I, for one, must rather admire the courageous tenacity with which they have clung to life and retained at least the rudiments of eyes through centuries of darkness and deprivation. And I hold it far more logical, as well as far more generous, to argue that if as the result of one catastrophe over which they had no control their optic nerve has shrunk to an insensitive thread, by another and more gracious catastrophe, that shall restore them to light, they may yet recover the precious faculty of vision of which, for no sin of their own and by no choice of their own, they have been deprived.

And if this analogy—which we did not choose, be it remembered, but which Mr. Drummond has offered us—is to hold in a higher sphere, must we not infer from it, not that the vast majority of men will be doomed to an eternal loss and misery, because they suffer from a catastrophe from which they could not escape; but that mere justice demands that a real and free act of choice should yet be open to them, and even that another and more gracious catastrophe should await them, by which they will be raised into larger and happier conditions, conditions in which they too may come to see and welcome the light, to thrive and develop new powers in it, before any final sentence be passed upon them? If we suffer for the sin of Adam or the sins of our fathers, so that, with all the outward show of eyes, we yet cannot see God and live, are we to blame therefor? If, by some irresistible bias or law of our nature, we have grown so accustomed to darkness as to have lost the very faculty of vision, may we not hope, may we not in common justice expect and demand *that*, by some such catastrophe as death itself, should none occur before, a light shall be let in upon our darkness which will develop that faculty within us, and raise us to a state in which we may both see and live, if we will?

We do not press this analogy. We do not rely upon it.

We simply plead that it tells just as fairly, nay, more fairly, in favour of the conclusion which Mr. Drummond rejects than in favour of that which he appears so eager, and even too eager, to enforce. We have seen how he snatches at every analogy in Nature which seems to sustain his doctrinal inference, however inconsistent one may be with another, however slender or dubious may be the support it lends him, however easily or justly it may be turned against himself. The Agnostic, in his despair, affirms that the immortal life of man is only "an hypothesis based on contradictory probabilities." And now that we have examined his reasoning point by point, and considered the analogies on which it is founded, we shall not be doing Mr. Drummond an injustice we think, if, in conclusion, we sum up our verdict upon it in the sentence, that his argument for the eternal death of man is only "an hypothesis based on contradictory *im*probabilities."

Not that we thereby assume either his doctrine of death and damnation to be false, or the opposite doctrine of life and salvation to be true. All that we here contend for is, that the ultimate destiny of the human race is not to be either proved or disproved by arguments drawn from the analogies of Nature, but can only be ascertained by a patient, open-minded, and reverent study of the inspired Word. The conclusion to which that sacred Word leads us is the only conclusion to which we can trust, and on which we can rely. And as this is a point on which we do not doubt that Professor Drummond entirely agrees with us, we gladly take leave of him while yet we are in full accord with him. And indeed we should be sorry if our strictures on his first two chapters left the impression on the mind of any of our readers, that there is little or nothing in the book which they are likely to approve and admire. No doubt his Theology is questionable at times. So also, we must add if we are to be fair, is his Science. For he is

constantly representing the good creatures of God, vegetable and animal, as transgressors of a law by which they are bound. And yet *no true physical law ever was, is, or can be broken*; while, to bring his organic kingdom under his quasi-moral law, he is obliged to endow his *flora* with will and his *fauna* with conscience; for the former are always "choosing," "meaning," etc., the latter, always doing wrong or right. Like Æsop, in short, he turns all his animals and plants into men and women, and sets them to talk to us, and, worst of all, to *preach at us*. Nevertheless, there is much in this book which is striking, original, suggestive, at once finely conceived and eloquently expressed—notably in the two chapters on Parasitism and Semi-Parasitism; much which will be most helpful to both cleric and laymen; and we strongly recommend our readers to peruse and judge it for themselves.

ALMONI PELONI.

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## THE REFORMERS AS EXPOSITORS.

### I. ERASMUS.

IN previous papers I have endeavoured to give the thoughtful reader some means of estimating the value of the Scholastic Exegesis which prevailed in Europe from the days of Bede († A.D. 735) down to those of Gabriel Biel, at the close of the fifteenth century. I will now endeavour in one or two papers to point out the immense change which took place in the methods of Biblical exposition at the period of the Reformation.

Such changes are rarely sudden and revolutionary. They are usually the slow outgrowth of views which have long before found isolated expression. The Reformers must be regarded as the founders of the modern system of Interpretation, but they were themselves indebted to the precursors

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of the Reformation in earlier centuries. Erasmus and Calvin did but carry out a work which had been initiated by Wiclif and Huss.

1. It is, for instance, hardly possible to exaggerate the services of WICLIF. The fact of his deeming it essential to translate the Bible into a tongue "understood of the people," marks the depth of his insight into the nature of Scripture, and the force of his revolt from the politic traditions of the dominant priestcraft. The time was fast ripening for the overthrow of Scholastic Exegesis, when such a man as Wiclif could write, "It is obvious that the whole error in the knowledge of Scripture, and its debasement and falsification by incompetent persons, rises from ignorance of grammar and logic: and unless God aids to the understanding of those rudiments of faith, the faith of Scripture will be much undervalued."<sup>1</sup>

2. HUSS—who, both indirectly, and in all probability directly, had been greatly influenced by the life and opinions of Wiclif—did much to extend his work. His synoptic commentary on the Gospels is indeed a compilation from the Fathers, much in the fashion of the old glosses; but his commentary on the Catholic Epistles is of a more independent character, and shews his preference for moral and dogmatic teaching rather than for the allegoric mode of treatment which at that time was universal. In his various writings he clearly enunciates the principle that the Scriptures furnish the sole absolute rule of life, and that no Christian man is bound to believe anything which is not contained therein, and cannot be proved thereby. He repudiates the claim of the Pope to interpret Revelation at his will, and says that there is no heresy except such as consists in a contradiction of Scripture. He also insists on abiding by the literal sense. Alike his principles and his practice earn the just encomium of Luther, that "in

<sup>1</sup> *Triologus*, i. 8 (sp. Klausen, *Gesch. d. Neut. Hermen.*, p. 212).



the treatment and explanation of Scripture he was a man of ability and weight."

3. But the father and founder of modern Biblical Criticism is NICOLAS OF LYRA, who died A.D. 1341, when Wiclif was seventeen years old. In two particulars he towered over his contemporaries and predecessors, namely in his philological knowledge, and in his all-but-total abandonment of the allegorical method. In both respects he was a worthy predecessor of Erasmus, and he deserved his scholastic title of the *Doctor planus et utilis*.<sup>1</sup> The name of his epoch-making work was *Postilla perpetuæ seu Commentaria brevia in universa Biblia*. In the Prologue to this work he sets forth his exegetical principles. It is true that here he adheres to the current distinction between "outward" and "inner" Scripture, and recognizes (as in his age he could hardly refrain from doing) the three traditional divisions of the mystic sense into allegoric, tropologic or moral, and anagogic or spiritual. He is even the author of the famous lines:—

Littera gesta docet; quid credas allegoria,  
Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.

But he lays down the strict rule that all other senses must be built upon the literal sense as their sole and absolute foundation, and he expresses his own determination "to dwell on the literal sense, and to interpose very few and brief mystic expositions." He practically swept away the validity of nine-tenths of the then treasured commentaries by his axiom, that "when the mystic interpretation differs from the literal sense, it must be regarded as improper and

<sup>1</sup> In describing the library of "Bays" in the Dunciad, Pope says:

"There saved by spice, like mummies, many a year,  
Do bodies of Divinity appear;  
DU LYRA there a dreadful front extends," etc.

Pope, in a note, says, Nic. de Lyra, or Harpsfield, a very voluminous commentator, whose works in five vast folios were printed in 1472. Mr. Courthope says that Pope's date is wrong; and so it is, if he meant Harpsfield, Archdeacon of Canterbury, who died in 1583. But he probably meant the great commentator.

unfitting, or at any rate as less proper and fitting than others," and that only the literal sense is of any validity in dogmatic proofs. He objected altogether to the Kabbalism which split up texts into words, and unduly allegorized the force of the minutest particles.<sup>1</sup> Though his principles were superior to his practice, yet his clearness, his impartiality, his learning, his good sense, his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, the use which he made of that knowledge, his candid recognition of the merits of Rabbi Solomon Jizchaki (Rashi), and the manner in which he availed himself of the rich stores of knowledge enshrined in the works of other Jewish commentators, give him a right to be regarded as "the Jerome of the fourteenth century." The claim of his epitaph was fully established by his labours:—

Littera nempe nimis quæ quondam obscura jacebat,  
Omnes per partes clara labore meo est.

4. It was not, however, till the very dawn of the Reformation that the great principles which Nicholas of Lyra had enunciated and practised, bore their full fruit. It was natural that at the Renaissance, when "Greece rose from the dead with the New Testament in her hand," satisfactory results should spring from what has been called "the Protestant principle" of not accepting the authority of the Vulgate, but of referring, as Nicolas had constantly done, to the original languages. The honour of having written the first specifically philological commentary must be assigned to LAURENTIUS VALLA. Valla, a Canon of St. John Lateran, was born in 1415, and died in 1465. By profession he was a teacher of rhetoric rather than a theologian, but Erasmus was so much struck with his Notes on the New Testament—of which he found a MS.

<sup>1</sup> On the immense services of Nicolas of Lyra, see (among others) Fabricius, *Bibl. Lat.*, vol. v. p. 104; Rosenmüller, *Hist. Interpr.*, vol. v. pp. 280 seqq.; Cave, *Hist. Litter.*; Merx, *Eine Rede von Auslegen (ad fin.)*; Merx, *Joel*, pp. 805–839; Grätz, *Gesch. d. Juden*, vol. vii. p. 512; Klausen, l. c., pp. 210 ff.

in a monastic library at Brussels—that he published them with a warm eulogy, A.D. 1505, forty years after the death of their author. They are purely literary and aphoristic, and have little religious or spiritual interest. Their value consists in the recognition of the supreme importance of abandoning when necessary an imperfect translation and a dominant tradition, and of ascertaining what the Apostles and Evangelists really wrote and really meant.<sup>1</sup> The writer had already shewn his courage by refuting the genuineness of the pretended Donation of Constantine to the Popes, and by setting aside the legend about the composition of the Apostles' Creed. Valla shewed the same spirit in the freedom with which he rejected the views of St. Thomas Aquinas and others of the Schoolmen which were then accepted with extravagant servility. He ventured to remark that, since the Scholastic writers were for the most part entirely ignorant of Greek, he wonders at their boldness in venturing to comment on St. Paul at all.<sup>2</sup> He goes even further than this, for he does not scruple to criticise St. Augustine, and the Vulgate version. His criticisms are not always correct,<sup>3</sup> but he rightly realized the necessity for textual study and philological explanation, and he helped to stimulate the enquiries of later writers. He was the protégé and the intimate personal friend of Pope Nicolas V.; but so distasteful was his independence to the ecclesiastics of his Church, that Cardinal Bellarmine calls him “a precursor of the Lutherans,” and Cornelius Aurotinus stigmatized him as “a croaking raven.”

<sup>1</sup> Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, vol. i. p. 147, calls them “the earliest specimens of explanations founded on the original language.”

<sup>2</sup> He somewhat contemptuously rejects the legend that St. Paul had appeared in a vision to St. Thomas Aquinas to assure him that no one had understood his Epistles as he had done. “*Peream nisi id commentitium, nam cur eum Paulus non admonuit errorum suorum?*” See Valla, *Annotationes in 1 Cor. ix. 18*, and the more measured remarks of Erasmus on the same text.

<sup>3</sup> See R. Simon, *Hist. Critique*, p. 486, chap. xxxiv.

5. One name more must be mentioned—that of JACQUES LE FEVRE D'ÉTAPLES—usually known as Faber Stapulensis. Encouraged by the example of Valla, he sometimes diverged from the Vulgate in his Latin version of St. Paul's Epistles. He has the high honour of having produced the first French version of the Scriptures (A.D. 1523).<sup>1</sup> Like Valla, he never openly left the Church of Rome, yet his writings furnished some assistance to the Reformers. He was not a first-rate critic, but he helped to lead his age in the right direction, and to break the heavy yoke of Scholastic tradition. Erasmus, even while he freely corrects his errors, invariably speaks of him with personal respect.

6. The real founder however of the Biblical Criticism of the Reformation is ERASMUS of Rotterdam. In the remainder of this paper I will endeavour to point out the character of his contributions to the great cause of Scriptural Exposition.

i. It must be reckoned among his services that he finally made the path easy for all who followed him.<sup>2</sup> In the Preface to his Notes on the New Testament he says, "We by our diligence have smoothed a road which previously was rugged and troublesome, but in which henceforth great theologians may ride more easily with steeds and chariots. We have levelled the soil of the arena, in which, with fewer obstacles, they may now display those splendid processions of their wisdom. We have cleansed with harrows the fallow land which heretofore was impeded with briars and burs. We have swept away the impediments, and have opened a field wherein they who may hereafter wish to explain the secrets of Scripture may either play together with greater freedom or join battle with more convenience."

<sup>1</sup> This French version was published anonymously, but there is little doubt that Le Fevre was the author.

<sup>2</sup> For the influence exercised by the translations of Erasmus on Tyndale and Coverdale, see Westcott's *Hist. of the Engl. Bible*, pp. 140, 208-205.

It was his sincere and ardent desire that the Bible should be more widely known. The publication of his Greek Testament "formed a great epoch in the history of Western Christendom, and was a gift of incalculable value to the Church." "I do not see," he says,<sup>1</sup> "why the unlearned are to be kept away, especially from the evangelical writings, which were proclaimed alike to learned and unlearned, equally to Greeks and Scythians, as much for slaves as for the free, at the same time to men and to women, not less to peasants than to kings." And again, "I should prefer to hear some maidens talking about Christ, than some who, in the opinion of the vulgar, are consummate Rabbis." If we recall with admiration the vow of our own great Tyndale (in answer to the learned man who had said, "We had better be without God's laws than the Pope's") that "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause the boy that driveth the plough shall know more of Scripture than thou doest"—we must remember that Erasmus had already spoken with scorn of "men and women chattering like parrots the Psalms and prayers which they did not understand"; and had expressed the wish to see the glory of the Cross of Christ honoured in all languages, to hear the Psalms sung by the labourer at his plough, and the herdsman amid his flock, and the Gospels read to poor women as they sat spinning at the wheel. "The vail of the Temple," said Erasmus, "has now been rent in twain, and it is no longer a single High Priest who alone can enter into the Holy of Holies."<sup>2</sup>

ii. He chiefly carried out this aim by his Paraphrases. He knew that the words of the Vulgate had partly been deadened by familiarity, partly perverted by mistaken appli-

<sup>1</sup> *Præf. in Paraph. in Matt.*

<sup>2</sup> Since writing this paragraph I see that Canon Westcott (*Hist. of the Engl. Bible*, p. 26) thinks that Tyndale's phrase was suggested by Erasmus. The English martyr Bilney owed his conversion to Erasmus's New Testament.

cation. His paraphrases were, as he explained, a freer kind of continuous commentary in which everything was added which seemed actually necessary to explain the meaning of the writer. He saw that many were deterred from reading the New Testament by its style and its difficulties. "I have endeavoured," he writes, "to meet their distaste and their despair, in such a way that my paraphrases may be regarded as commentaries by those who desire no word of the sacred writings to be changed, while to those who are free from superstition of that kind, Paul himself may seem to speak."<sup>1</sup> In carrying out this design it was his object "to supply gaps; to soften the abrupt; to arrange the confused; to simplify the involved; to untie the knotty; to throw light on the obscure; to give the Roman franchise to Hebraisms; in a word so to alter the language of St. Paul that the *παράφρασις* may not become a *παραφρόνησις*;<sup>2</sup> in other words, so to speak in another manner as not to say other things." No one can doubt that exegetically at any rate Erasmus belongs to the Reformers, and that his Translation, his Paraphrases, and his Annotations mark an immense advance in the history of Biblical Interpretation.

iii. By the fame of his ability and learning, Erasmus greatly strengthened the growing spirit of manly independence and established the right and duty of private judgment. His notes are so original that they can still be read with advantage. He wrote in an admirable Latin style, with expressions full of humour and vivacity, and his acknowledged learning made it more easy for him than

<sup>1</sup> *Dedicat. paraphr. in Ep. ad Rom.*

<sup>2</sup> Luther adopted this nickname for them, *Paraphroneses*, "insanities"; but Melancthon thought very highly of their exegetical value, and Herder said that they were worth their weight in gold. Jortin (*Life of Erasmus*, vol. ii. p. 91) speaks of them with warm praise, and Hallam (*Lit. of Europe*, vol. i. p. 373) says that by an Order in Council in 1547 every parish church in England was obliged to have a copy of them.

it would have been for many men to express himself with freedom on the inadequacy of the dominant criticism. He places the Fathers first in the rank of interpreters, especially those who were acquainted with Greek and Hebrew; but he calls attention to their own admission that they left much work to be done by those who succeeded them. Of later writers he speaks with much greater freedom. For the compilers of glosses he had little veneration, and not much for the Schoolmen.<sup>1</sup> Though he refers to Thomas Aquinas with invariable respect, he does not hesitate to shake his authority by pointing out the errors which arose especially from his ignorance of Greek.<sup>2</sup> He corrects a "*pudendus lapsus*" committed by no less a person than Peter Lombard, "the Master of the Sentences," who, in Matt. i. 19, had rendered *παράδειγματῶν* (Lat. *traducere*) by "rem habere cum sponsâ"; and while admitting that the error was "due rather to the age than to the man," he remarks that such errors become the more conspicuous in those who profess themselves to be teachers of the world.<sup>3</sup> Of his contemporaries he speaks with open sarcasm, and remarking that the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Augustinians had each one commentator from whom they would admit no deviations, he says that the seeker after truth must accept no man's absolute authority, for such an authority is not even claimed by any great teacher, and if claimed, ought all the more to be refused.<sup>4</sup>

iv. A fourth service, and one which ought to have

<sup>1</sup> Ubique fere gaudeo sequi vetustissimos quosque Doctores Ecclesie potius quam placita Scholasticorum, quorum aliqua sunt dubie veritatis, aliqua etiam inter ipsos controversa sunt.—*Præfat. Declar. ad Censur. Theol. Paris.*

<sup>2</sup> On 1 Cor. xiv. 11 he blames the confidence with which St. Thomas Aquinas "spoke of things which he did not understand," as when he gives a strange erroneous definition of what is meant by "barbarians." See too his note on Heb. xi. 37. He speaks highly of him on Rom. i. 4.

<sup>3</sup> See his *Annotations* on Matt. i. 19, xxvi. 31; Rom. i. 4; 2 Cor. ii. 23; 1 Tim. ii. 15, etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Annot.* in Luke ii. 35; 1 Tim. i. 7. (*Klausen, l.c. 222.*)

saved Protestant exegesis from much of its later deadness, was his dogmatic independence. He expressly rejects the exegetic infallibility not only of the Pope, but even of Churches;<sup>1</sup> and writing on the word *μυστήριον* in Eph. v. 32, denies that it furnishes any proof that marriage is a sacrament,—a doctrine which he only accepts in deference to tradition. He points out the late origin of the dogma of transubstantiation, and admits that he should have accepted the Zuinglian view of the Eucharist but for Church authority. This independence got him into serious trouble. He tells us how on one occasion a Carmelite preacher, in the violet hood and cap of a Doctor, noticing his presence in church, charged him with two out of the three sins against the Holy Ghost—namely Presumption, especially for having ventured to “correct” the Lord’s Prayer and the Magnificat; and impugning of recognized truth, because after hearing two preachers the same day, he had observed that neither of them understood his subject. In this matter Erasmus paid the penalty which all must pay who love truth better than ecclesiastical tradition.<sup>2</sup> On speaking to his assailants, he found that (as usual in such cases) none of them had read the book they were attacking. There never can be any advance in knowledge without freedom of spirit. It is to the credit of Erasmus that, with noble candour, he never hesitated to reject a Scripture proof when it seemed to be inadequate,<sup>3</sup> nor to retain a Scripture phrase although

<sup>1</sup> *Annot.* in 1 Cor. vii. 39; 2 Cor. x. 8; 1 Tim. i. 7.

<sup>2</sup> What he felt most was the censure of the Theological Faculty of Paris. Natalis Bedda called for the condemnation of “Græcising Theologians,” and Titelmann, Latomus, Lee, Stunica, and others severely attacked him. Caranza published a book called *The Blasphemies and Impieties of Erasmus*. For an account of these controversies see R. Simon’s *Hist. Crit. der N.T.*, pp. 521–536. In answer to Stunica, who stung him by the remark “*Erasmus Lutherissat*,” he answered that in truth “*Lutherus Erasmisat*” (*Apol. ad libell. Stunic.*). Among other complaints, the Spaniard is indignant that he had robbed Hispania of a letter by printing *Eravia* in Rom. xv. 28.

<sup>3</sup> See his note on Rom. v. 5; and Phil. ii. 6, which he says cannot be used against the Arians. See too on Matt. ii. 5; 1 Tim. i. 17; 1 John v. 7–20.



it was capable of abuse.<sup>1</sup> He implies that "Inspiration" is not by any means identical with infallibility. "Christ alone," he says, "is called the Truth. He alone was free from all error."<sup>2</sup>

v. The philological merits of Erasmus were of a high order.<sup>3</sup> He led the way in critical studies by his *Editio Princeps* of the Greek Testament in 1516. He was one of the first to convince the Church of the now admitted spuriousness of 1 John v. 7. His materials were of course most defective, nor was it possible in that day that critical principles should be securely based. But any one who will trace the critical and philological remarks of modern commentaries to their first source will soon feel how much we owe to Erasmus. With the assistance of *Æcolampadius* he sometimes refers with advantage to Hebrew idioms,<sup>4</sup> and observes that St. Paul's style is charged with Hebraisms. When we remember that in his day thousands of theologians did not so much as know whether the Apostles wrote in Greek or in Hebrew, or as many supposed in Latin,<sup>5</sup> and that in his Preface to Valla he has to defend grammarians against the charge of audacity for presuming to write comments at all, we may estimate the theological value of his philological contributions to the knowledge of Scripture. We may refer for instance to his notes on Rom. v. 12 ("in that all have sinned"); Phil. ii. 6 ("thought it not robbery to be equal with God"), and Rom. ix. 5 ("God over all blessed for ever"). He has excellent remarks on many of the rarer words, as on the readings *συναλιζόμενος* and *συναυλιζόμενος* (Acts i. 4); and on *καταβραβεύετω* (Col. ii. 18). In his own day he was fiercely attacked for his opinions on the Greek style of the New

<sup>1</sup> See his note on *μηδὲ ὁ υἱός*, Matt. xxiv. 56.      <sup>2</sup> On Matt. ii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Even Erasmus had to struggle with the fear that the study of philology would promote Paganism.

<sup>4</sup> Not always correctly. See his notes on Matt. xxi. 42; Luke i. 37.

<sup>5</sup> *Annot. in Act. Apost. xxii. 9; John xiv. 26.*

Testament; on the possibility of trivial errors and discrepancies in the sacred writers;<sup>1</sup> on the form in which our Lord clothed some of his teaching;<sup>2</sup> on the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews; on the Epistle of St. James; and on the Apocalypse:—but on all these points he has expressed views which command an ever-increasing multitude of modern suffrages.

vi. Once more Erasmus powerfully advanced the saner interpretation which abandoned the mystic sense. In the Dedication of his Paraphrase on the Gospels he says that some of the allegoric interpretations of his predecessors seemed to him so arbitrary that he was almost tempted to regard them as a jest. He declines to follow them on a superstitious road, and says that he will only use such methods sparingly.<sup>3</sup> In his notes on Matt. v. 16, xix. 2; John v. 2; Acts xxvii. 12; 2 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 24 he gives specimens of the extravagant allegories of Cardinal Hugo. On this subject, however, he does not speak with perfect consistency; for in his Preface to Ecclesiastes he says that any interpreter may allegorize if he does so piously, and that the Holy Spirit may have intended the words to be taken in various senses, which is to be set down not to the “uncertainty” but to the “fecundity” of Scripture. His most fundamental misconception on this point is shewn by his famous remark in his Enchiridion, that if we leave out of view the allegoric meaning “we might just as well read the story of Livy as the Book of Judges.” But, in spite of such remarks, his example was of the greatest value, and it helped to dethrone the defective theory which he was unable altogether to shake off.

vii. The last service which I shall mention is the sovereign good sense which Erasmus shews in handling

<sup>1</sup> On Luke xxii. 36; John ii. 19, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Annott. in Acts x. 38; Pref. in Rom.*

<sup>3</sup> On Matt. ii. 6.

Scripture. This is specially exhibited in his refusal to be misled by theological quibbles, and to indulge in empty speculations. He requires that Scripture should be interpreted reverently and with godly fear. "What thou readest and understandest therein thou must embrace with firmest faith. Frivolous questions, and those which spring from a mistaken piety, thou must reject: *dic quæ supra nos nihil ad nos.*" Above all, he adds, we must not torture the Scripture into accordance with our own will and pleasure, but rather bring under its rule our own prejudices and our own way of life.

It is clear then that Erasmus must always hold a very high place among Bible Interpreters. His name is one of the few which mark a distinct and decided progress. To say that he made mistakes is merely to say that he was human, and his work was imperfect as all human work is and must be imperfect.<sup>1</sup> The charge that he sometimes made needless alterations in the Vulgate translation is the same that has been brought against our Revisers, and it can only be judged in each separate instance. Nor can I set down among his faults the polemical digressions of which his critics so bitterly complain. We could ill spare his reflections on "the commandments of men" (Matt. xv. 9); on the Pharisaism of priests (Matt. xxiii. 5); on marriage dispensations (1 Cor. vii. 39); on idle speculations (1 Tim. i. 6); on the spirituality of true religion (John iv. 24); on the non-existence of any earthly infallibility (Matt. xvii. 5); on monkish divisions (Matt. xxiv. 23); on religious mendicancy (Matt. v. 3); and so forth. He rightly believed that the Word of God contains the Magna Charta of freedom from tyrannous burdens and false traditions, and he was justified in so interpreting it—at whatever cost

<sup>1</sup> In his paraphrases there are unauthorised additions to, or modifications of the sense, in Matt. vi. 11, ii. 11, xxvi. 26; Luke i. 69; John i. 1-3; Phil. ii. 6, etc. Lee said he could point out 300 errors in his New Testament.

of hatred and obloquy—as to render a direct assistance to the emancipation of the human soul in the days wherein his lot was cast.

F. W. FARRAR.

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### ADAM'S GOSPEL.

GENESIS iii. 14, 15.

IN his Epistle to the Galatians (Chap. iii. 17) St. Paul argues that the Gospel is older, as well as better, than the Law; and that the law, “which came four hundred and thirty years after,” could not disannul the gospel given to Abraham, or make “the promise of none effect.” Had he been arguing with Gentiles instead of Jews, he might have contended that the Gospel was more than sixteen hundred years older than the Law, and that the promise given to Adam could not be disannulled by a law which came sixteen centuries after it.

We had some trouble to discover what Abraham's Gospel was;<sup>1</sup> but it will cost us no trouble to discover the Gospel given to Adam. *That* was long since determined for us. There has never been any doubt or question about it. With one consent the Church, whether speaking by the early Fathers or the most modern of Divines, proclaims the two verses now before us to be the first Evangel, the first Gospel given to man.

The difficulty, here, lies in determining—not what the Gospel is, but—what it means, what it conveyed to Adam and what it should convey to us. For no passage in the Old Testament has been more frequently, or more variously, handled; as, indeed, was quite inevitable, since few passages legitimately convey more and larger meanings. Only two interpretations seem to be wholly inadmissible: (1) that which reduces it to a nature-myth, invented to account

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. vi. of THE EXPOSITOR (New Series), pp. 98 ff.

for the instinctive repulsion of man from the serpent; and (2) that which finds in "the seed of the woman" so clear and distinct an indication of the Son of Man as enabled Adam to foresee Him and the work He came to do. The first of these is an impertinence; the second, an anachronism. But between these wide limits I know of no interpretation of the passage which may not be reasonably drawn from it by those who set themselves to exhaust all that it contains and implies.

To say that his Gospel enabled Adam to look through the ages and behold the conquest of the serpent by the Son of Man, is plainly an anachronism and something more; for it is to affirm that he saw what our Lord Himself declares that "kings and prophets," who lived long after Adam, desired, but were not able to see. To say that his Gospel is simply a nature-myth, invented to explain man's instinctive abhorrence of the serpent, is plainly an insult both to reason and to Scripture. For throughout the East—by virtue of an emotion with which even we of the West can sympathize, by an instinctive symbolism which even we can apprehend—the sinuous and poisonous serpent is, and always has been, a recognized emblem of the evil principle or power. How should it not be when, in India alone, more men are slain by the serpent every year than by all the carnivora put together? This emblematic use of the serpent was familiar to the Jews, who called the evil one *hannachash hakkadmoni*, "the old serpent." It is sanctioned by Holy Writ, where we read (Wisdom ii. 24), "By the envy of *the devil*, death entered into the world;" where our Lord Himself (John viii. 44) affirms that "the devil was a murderer *from the beginning*;" while the Apocalypse expressly identifies the two in the phrase twice used (Rev. xii. 9, xx. 2), "*the old serpent which is the devil and Satan*."

No doubt we may honestly take the narrative of the Fall in the Book of Genesis in various ways. We may hold it to

be a sober chronicle of the act by which the first man fell from his first estate ; or we may take it as a philosophic myth intended to account for the complex moral condition of the human race ; or we may regard it as a parable of the mode in which all men fall away from their original innocence, by permitting the lower appetites and desires of their nature to override its higher dictates and affections. There is much to be said for each of these views—so much that each of them has taken root in good and honest hearts. But, take it how we will, we *must* take it as charged with a moral and religious intention ; the serpent must be something more than a serpent ; the narrative must, in some form, convey the story of a mortal struggle between the powers of good and evil in the soul of man. Neither reason nor Scripture will suffer us to see less in it than this ; while, if we see in it so much as this, it matters comparatively little what else we fail to see in it.

I. If, then, we assume that there had been such a strife in the soul of Adam, and that, for a time at least, the serpent in him had conquered the man, the animal life had mastered his proper human life, that the evil in him had overcome the good, we can see at once how the doom passed on the serpent became a veritable gospel to him, good news of great joy ; and not to him alone, but to all who should come after him. For taken at its lowest, in its simplest form, this doom prophesied the degradation of the serpent—"on thy belly shalt thou go ;" his defeat—"thou shalt lick the dust ;" and his defeat by the very race which he had just overthrown—the woman's seed shall "bruise thy head," the very seat of life and power. That is to say, if, as we are bound to do, we take the serpent as an emblem of the principle of evil, then the final and utter overthrow of evil was foretold in the very hour of its apparent victory. That old serpent, the devil, may have assumed, despite his subtlety, that, once conquered, men would prove his faithful

servants, his close and attached allies. If he did, he had deceived himself. By the grace of God—for it is God who is to “put enmity” between the woman’s seed and the serpent’s seed—the forces of goodness were to be so revived and invigorated in man’s soul that there was to be a constant antagonism between the two, a constant and unsparing war, renewed generation after generation, in which indeed the human race might take as well as give many wounds, but of which the issue was never to be doubtful for a moment; the heel, often bitten, and because it was bitten, was at last to stamp out the life from the serpent’s head.

The first, simplest, and largest meaning of these words is, therefore, that the seed of the woman, *i.e.* the human race as a whole, so far from succumbing to, is to overthrow evil and its brood,—is to conquer its secular spiritual enemy. And we arrive at this meaning, so far as I can see, without putting any force upon the words, by merely taking them as we may well believe Adam himself to have taken them. I have endeavoured not to import any modern sense, any theological intention, into them, but to read them in their first intention, in their obvious and original sense. But, taken even in this sense, they yield us this great promise, this divine hope (a hope which has been too much lost sight of in endless wearisome discussions of the mere form of the sacred narrative); that in the everlasting purpose and love of God, the evil that is in the world, and which often looks so inveterate and invincible, is not to overcome in the end, but, after long painful strife, is to be overcome of good.

To Adam, trembling under the burden of his sin, apprehending an eternal loss and shame, as he well might if he and his children after him were to live under the anger of God, there came this gracious promise, that his defeat was not irreversible, that it was to be reversed; that, though the conflict with the forces of evil might be long and sore, it was to issue in a final and complete triumph.

And was not that a veritable gospel to him? a gospel which even *he* could apprehend? a gospel exquisitely adapted to his position and needs? a gospel on which he could rest, in which he could rejoice?

Nay, is it not a veritable gospel to us also, that on the first page of the Bible, the first leaf of the human story—a page else so dark and threatening—this great promise, this comforting and sustaining hope, should be inscribed? When we once comprehend it, if only we believe that, in some form, this prophecy of the victory of good over evil was conveyed to man at the very outset of his chequered career, is it not as if once more the Spirit of God had moved upon the face of the primal darkness, saying, “Let there be light,” and, by that mighty word, had turned the darkness into light?

It is at a heavy cost that we ever lose hold, even if we do not also lose sight, of this ancient gospel, this primitive evangel. *We* fall as Adam fell, falling again and again. *We* suffer the baser passions, the animal appetites and lusts, in us to override the promptings and aspirations of our better part. The sting and poison of sin enters into and inflames the soul. We are appalled by the subtlety with which it turns our very gifts and virtues against us, the mysterious energy with which, even when it has been subdued, it renews its force within us. We are the more appalled as we consider our fellows, and mark the same mysterious and ever-renewed conflict in them, issuing too often in the same disastrous result—as we look out into the world and see everywhere around us the tokens of a misery and a defeat like our own. Our fear verges on despair when Theology, with its thin stern lips, instead of comforting us with the succours of charity, or animating us with the hope of victory, and the promise that, if we faint not, the serpent's head shall one day be under our heel, dooms us, or the vast majority of us, to a hopeless strife and an everlasting perdi-



tion. And all because we forget the gospel given to Adam, *i.e. to man*, which no word or law coming after, whether from God or man, can disannul! We could not thus tremble and despair did we but carry in our hearts this sure word of prophecy—that the whole seed of the woman is to triumph over the whole seed of the serpent. Did we but cherish this ancient and confirmed hope, instead of sighing with Job, “Man, born of woman, is of few days and full of trouble,” we should rather sing, “Man, born of woman, is of an endless life; and though he may have much trouble in the flesh, nevertheless walks and strives in the light of an assured victory.”

For, to us at least, not the least valuable part of this ancient Gospel is the clause which affirms that the serpent shall bite or bruise man's heel. It is of immense value to us, because it accounts for the fact by which most of all we are perplexed, and on which we sometimes brood till hope well nigh gives place to despair. It shews that He who promised the ultimate triumph of good in the soul of man was not unaware of, and did not overlook, the long strife with evil in which we find ourselves engaged, the wounds we should receive in it, the weakness and pain and misery it would breed in us and in all men. In Adam's Gospel there is none of that shallow optimism which sees only that which is good in human destiny, because it wilfully closes its eyes on all that is evil in the human lot, and babbles worthless prophecies of hope only because it refuses to recognize the darker phases of human life. On the contrary, it fully recognizes the evil element in man, the corruption of his nature, the disorder of his faculties, the strife to which this disorder dooms him, the subtle burning poison by which his whole frame is infected, the pain and degradation and misery which result from his too frequent subordination of spirit to sense, of duty to pleasure, of conscience to convenience, of the man in him to the beast in him. It

shirks nothing and omits nothing. It holds full in view all the sordid and painful facts of human nature and experience which often move us to fear and hopelessness. And, with all these in view, it nevertheless predicts the ultimate and perfect victory of good over evil—the destruction of all that is evil, the universal rule and triumph of that which is good. And thus it comes to us with an irresistible force, and possesses an unspeakable value. If it simply promised victory, and said nothing about the strife, we might distrust it. But since it insists on the long and cruel warfare, from the wounds of which we are even now smarting, and only promises us victory when that warfare shall be accomplished, it brings its own credentials with it. It tells us what we know to be true, and so encourages us to listen and believe when it speaks of what we do not know as yet. If we accept it as in any sense a word from God, it cannot fail to impress itself upon us as good news of great joy for us and for all people. And hence it will be well for us, so often as we are tempted to doubt the final victory of good because of the present prevalence of evil, because of its strange vitality in our own hearts, or because of the helpless misery to which it has reduced many of our fellows, to recall this Gospel, which, while it predicts that evil shall long bite the heel of man and inject its poison into his very blood, also predicts that man shall at last crush evil in the very seat and fountain of its power.

II. This I take to be the original meaning of the words before us, the meaning in which Adam himself would be able to read them; and I do not see how any man can read them fairly without finding so much as this in them, or how, taking them even in this primitive sense, he can fail to gather courage from them and a great hope both for himself and for the world at large.

But even of those who gladly take them in this sense some may say: "*The end* is still very far off. Must we

wait till then for any fulfilment of this ancient promise? Is there no other meaning in it; no nearer hope?" And happily we can reply, There are other meanings in it; there is a nearer hope, and St. Paul shall guide us to it. Writing to the Roman Christians of his day (Rom. xvi. 20) he took leave of them with this promise: "The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet *shortly*." And whatever may have been the first and special intention of his promise, there is no doubt that it implies a great general truth such as we are now inquiring for, and which our own experience confirms. This truth is that wherever we find a good man, or a company of good men like that at Rome, engaged, as all good men are, in an open warfare with evil, there we may find a partial fulfilment of the promise made to Adam, and see good triumphing over evil. Do we not all know such men—men really and genuinely good, in whom all taints of nature, all defects of will, all vices of the blood, are being gradually subdued; to whom all temptations to evil are losing their power; who are daily growing in wisdom, in right living, in sweetness and purity of nature, so that we long to be like them and to share their peace? Talk with them, indeed, and they will still lament the undetected and unsubdued evils of their nature, still condemn themselves as unprofitable servants, still mourn that they are so far from all perfection. But whatever the estimate they may put on themselves, and however just it may be, you no more expect them to speak an untrue word, or to see them do an unjust or unkindly deed, than you expect to see the sun turn to darkness or the moon to blood. No doubt the strife is still going on within them; but none the less you feel that in them the victory is already won in part; that in the end it is assured, at least for them; and you would be as much amazed as grieved were they to fall away from the grace they have attained.

Such as they are, such in some measure are all true

members of the Christian Church. I do not say that such are all the members of our several Churches ; for not even in the judgment of charity can all who are enrolled in our several ecclesiastical organizations be deemed men who walk after the spirit and not after the senses, who put duty before pleasure, truth before prejudice, righteousness before success, and the praise of God before the praise of men. But there are such men in all the Churches, and outside them all ; good men, who honestly prefer truth, right-doing, and charity to all the lures and temptations of the flesh, the world, and the devil ; and these constitute the one Catholic Church of God throughout all the world. In these, then, and we all know some of them, there is a *present* victory of goodness, albeit the strife with evil still goes on within them ; and in their victory we may share.

We need not, therefore, strain forward to "the end," to the ultimate and universal triumph, which may be ages and æons off yet, though it is much to know that, even in the end, evil is to be overcome of good. We may see triumphs of goodness around us—only partial as yet, it may be, but nevertheless real triumphs, triumphs so real and so great that we have no doubt what the final issue will be. And on these we may stay our hearts when our hearts grow faint within us, because *our* strife with evil is so painful and the victory still seems so dubious or distant. If men of like passions with ourselves, of the same nature and the same temptations, beset by the same foes, betrayed by the same infirmities, depressed by the same fears, have won what we confess to be a virtual triumph over the forces of evil, and hold the head of the serpent under their heel, the promise which has been fulfilled in them may also be fulfilled in us. We have the same Gospel in which to hope, the same Grace on which to lean ; and if we are sincerely striving against sin, we have the selfsame assurance of victory, whether in this life or in that which is to come.

III. But even if both the final complete victory and the present partial but growing victory of good over evil should fail to reassure us, there is still hope for us. Even the demand for *a complete* victory over evil in this present world has been met—met once for all. There is still another meaning in Adam's Gospel, and a meaning which meets our most exorbitant demand. For if this promise is true of all men, of the whole seed of the woman, of humanity at large, must it not be true of the Son of Man? If it be true of the whole Church, must it not also be true of the Founder and Head of the Church? It may be, and is, a mere anachronism to say that in the Woman's seed Adam recognized Jesus the Christ. But may not *we* see, after the event, what *he* could not see before the event? Must we not admit that the promise of Adam's Gospel was fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ? Did not the serpent bruise the heel of Him who died upon the tree, that He might take away the sin of the world? Did not He bruise the head of the serpent, and attain a perfect victory over evil, who did no sin but always kept His Father's commandment, who clothed Himself with righteousness as with a garment, and on whose sacred head the wreath of thorns was but an outward symbol of the inward crown of an inalienable and all-enduring love?

Even the Jews so read this ancient Gospel when, in their Targums, they affirmed that the victory over the serpent was to be accomplished "in the days of the Messiah." So too St. John read it, when he said that Jesus Christ was manifested "that he might destroy the works of the devil."

How great a gospel, then, have we in the Gospel of Adam; and what various and solid grounds for hope! If, wearied and perplexed by the power of evil in our own souls, or its wide dominion in the world around us, we doubt whether its power and dominion can ever be overthrown—the final triumph of good over evil is assured to

us from the beginning of the world, from the very moment in which sin began to reign ; and assured by One who is Himself the very Soul of goodness and the Fountain whence it flows ; One who foresaw that very conflict between the two, and those apparent occasional victories of evil which cause us to doubt. It is still further assured to us by those partial, but present and growing, victories which we see and admire in the good men of every Church and age. And most of all is it assured to us by the complete victory of Him who became as we are in this world, that we might be like Him both in this world and in the world to come, and share in his triumph over evil and all its works. The past, the present, the future, all shed influences of courage and hope upon us, and bid us be faithful that we too may bruise Satan under our feet shortly. And with such a stedfast and growing light of hope as this, a light which dawned in Adam's Gospel, has already spread into the day and reign of Christ, and is to culminate in the new day of a new heaven and a new earth, who need tremble or despair ? By hope, by *this* hope, are we saved.

S. Cox.

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### JACOB'S PILLAR.

#### GENESIS xxviii. 18.

THIS is the earliest recorded instance—possibly the earliest actual instance—of a practice which grew to be in one shape or another wellnigh universal. In what it first originated there is nothing to shew ; most probably in some traditional example, and perhaps therefore in this very act on the part of Jacob. It is easy to see that in the East rude stone memorials would be at once the readiest and most durable to erect. Coupled with this is the allowed

fact that blocks of stone<sup>1</sup> always attract attention in Oriental countries. Nor need it be thought strange or singular if among nomad races in primitive times, races at once observant and contemplative, habitually traversing barren wastes and trackless steppes marked by no sign of life, even a dumb stone were an object of curiosity and regard, especially if it bore signs of having been visited or set up by previous travellers, or if it served as a landmark of distance or direction. Morier relates in his travels through Persia that, when he unwittingly disturbed a stone heap, his guides warned him that it was a bad omen, and that it was a rule with travellers to preserve, if not to add to, any heap that they passed. What, therefore, we find in Scripture admits of wide illustration outside Scripture. Stones and heaps of stone were monuments of religious veneration, of formal covenants, of military marches, of victories, of burial places. There are the historic pillars of Sesostris, the fabulous pillars of Hercules; the cippus at one river, the stones at another, one for every soldier, heaped by Darius in his march through Thrace; there is the Homeric column at the tomb of Sarpedon, and the stones on the grave of Hector. The religious use soon degenerated into superstition, and this contributed to popularize and spread the custom. Pausanias mentions *rude stones*<sup>2</sup> as the gods of early Greece. Druidism is essentially an Oriental system; the Celts and Cymri were Asiatic in origin, and wherever they roamed, westward or northward, they set up their dolmens, cromlechs, and megalithic memorials of death or monuments of worship. Stone worship found its way to Scotland and Ireland. Dr. Geikie states that sacred stones, called *Bætylia*, were worshipped in Phrygia and Syria and Egypt. Lucian, in his *Charon*, speaks of crowning and anointing sepulchral stones. Herodotus speaks of an

<sup>1</sup> *Hajars, abens, or ebens.* See note in *Speaker's Commentary*, on 1 Kings i. 9.

<sup>2</sup> ἀγροὶ λίθοι. *Lib.* 7.

Arabian compact as ratified by drawing blood from the hands and smearing it on seven stones. Lucian's witness tallies with that of Christian writers in the same and following centuries, who speak of λίθοι ἐμψύχοι (λ. λιπάροι), *lapis lubricatus*. And more than one Christian Council has denounced the worship of trees and stones.

The reference to these various uses indicates the general tendency. The old stem of religion threw out many spreading offshoots of superstition ; unhealthy suckers from the parent root.

But it is not right that these things should be read between the lines of the plain ancient narrative of Holy Scripture. The plain outline may tempt imaginative colouring. There is a border land of right and wrong. Actions, neutral in appearance, will vary in moral principle and value according to the side from which the impulse comes.

The devotion of Jacob, like that of his grandfather Abraham, has been in modern times confounded with superstitions of an after growth.

For example, the Scriptural notices of Abraham are consistent and clear. There is no question in the Mosaic history, no question in the Christian comment (Heb. xi. 17), but that the sacrifice of Isaac was an act of faith and obedience, laudable in itself, and approved by God. And the uniform temper of faith displayed by Abraham, and the amplitude of revelations which guided the whole course of his conduct, are in perfect keeping with this colouring of the inspired record. But these considerations are ignored without scruple by some writers, who find in that unparalleled submission no self-surrender to God, but only the infection of a "fierce Syrian superstition."<sup>1</sup> I hold this imputation to be against reason, and beyond all justifiable latitude of interpretation. And the case of Jacob is

<sup>1</sup> R. Williams, in *Essays and Reviews*.



analogous. His action as related in the Scripture appears as one of pure faith and simple piety. Nor is it discredited by any admission that his memorial and his dedication of it were eventually copied and corrupted. And when it is said that "stones were the fetishes of primitive Semitic races,"<sup>2</sup> it is in a measure begging the question to allege for them so high an antiquity. In the natural process of things the true use precedes the abuse; if a system develops into superstition, that is no ground for imputing perversion at the source. But it is something more than begging the question to say that "Jacob transferred the name (sc. Bethel), from the stone to the place." The plain statement of the history is that "*Jacob took the stone . . . set it up . . . poured oil on it . . . called that place Bethel,*" and crowned his action by a vow that, if he returned in peace, the stone should be God's house, or a Bethel. He is at a later date reminded of this in a Divine vision (Gen. xxxv. 1, 7): "*Go up to Bethel, and make there an altar: . . . and he built there an altar, and called the place El-bethel.*" There is no hint that Bethel was recognized as a name for a stone; but to a mind habitually devout, no name could be fitter for the place where God had personally revealed Himself. We read in Chapter xxxi. 45, "*And Jacob took a stone and set it up for a pillar.*" Was that stone a Bethel? "*Jacob called it Galeed.*" Or was the similar pillar at Rachel's grave (Chap. xxxv. 20) a Bethel? An unbiassed view of the documentary terms must surely lead to the conclusion, not that Jacob adopted idolatrous names or usages, but that he expressed his sense of the Divine Presence by a natural descriptive title for the place, and marked it by an equally natural memorial. He might use a like memorial as witnessing a covenant, or perpetuating the remembrance of the dead; but this sacred name was reserved for the spot where he had seen God. I claim for

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Cheyne, on Isaiah lvii. 6.

Jacob independence of all superstition, whether existing or subsequent: I contend that he knew the name Bethel only in its proper and sacred sense; and that his act of simple faith is no more to be confounded with the false cultus which may have been developed out of it, than the act of Moses in setting up the Brazen Serpent is to be identified with the corrupt worship paid to it in the days of Hezekiah. It is clear that the approval of God was given to what Jacob said and did; it seems that Jacob on his death-bed recurs to the fact, when (assuredly without any tinge of misbelief) he makes *the stone* a symbol of the Shepherd of Israel.

Symbols, or memorials of worship, may easily, with the untaught multitude, pass into objects of worship. How soon such perversion sprang up may be gathered from the Mosaic law. The prohibitions in Leviticus xxvi. 1, in Deuteronomy xvi. 22, indicate the temptation to them. But it is to be observed that these prohibitions are not absolute. Pillars, such as the Israelites were cautioned against, such as they were to destroy among the heathen (Deut. vii. 5), were lawfully erected by Moses around the altar of God (Exod. xxiv. 4). Isaiah, in forecast of the overthrow of paganism in Egypt, foretells "*an altar to the Lord . . . and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord*" (Chap. xix. 19). *Abusus non tollit usum*. The prohibitions which imply a tendency toward abuse, sanction a true use. It was the same with the law as to high places; that law was not absolute, but conditional. It was the same with the law enjoining one place only of worship, which, however, admitted of altars being resorted to elsewhere. (See the notes in the *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. i. pp. 642 and 844.)

Mention has been made above of the Bætylia, a word whose origin and meaning are perhaps equally doubtful. Prof. Cheyne (on Isaiah lvii. 6) considers it a Phœnician of Bethel with a Greek termination. Dr. Geikie

derives it from an assumed Phœnician deity named Batulos. But the only authority for this seems to be the fragment of Sanchoniathon in Eusebius; and that is confessedly a forgery. The mythic and composite character of its Theogony may be judged of by the following (summarized) specimen: The dynasty of gods sprang from the marriage of οὐρανός and γῆ. Their four sons were Ilus (=Cronus), Betulus, Dagon, Atlas. Ilus, by aid of allies called ἐλαεῖμ, gained the supremacy. Dagon became Ζεὺς ἀρότριος. Ilus περιέχωσεν (heaped a mound over) Atlas on the earth. Then, passing over Betulus, he is said to have invented Βαιτύλια λίθους ἐμφύχους μηχανησάμενος. Here we have the word in question; but such wild mythology proves nothing. Is any connexion traceable between Phœnicia and Bethel? Bethel was no depot of commerce, and lay in no marked traffic route. If again it is true that Bætylia was originally used of dolmens and the like, how came the Phœnicians to have the word without the thing? For Mr. Fergusson, in his *Rude Stone Monuments*, tells us there are no dolmens in Phœnicia, though they abound in Palestine.

The simplest account of the matter is perhaps supplied by Bochart, when he quotes Damascius to shew that those "animated stones" were aerolites. If such was the first meaning of Bætylia, the derivation of the name from Bethel, whether accurate or not, is intelligible. For meteoric stones were invested in the popular idea with something of sanctity, and gave rise to the legends of διοπετῇ ἀγάλματα. The Black Stone of the Kaaba at Mecca is an instance in point, if it is rightly described by a modern traveller as having all the appearance of an aerolite crusted by age.

J. E. YONGE.

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## *THE TEN PIECES OF SILVER.*

LUKE xv. 8-10.

IN the three Parables recorded in this Chapter there is so evidently a progress and ascent of thought, they mount so naturally to a climax in their revelation of the redeeming love of God, that if at any point we fail to make that progress out, if we encounter anything in them which wears the aspect of an anticlimax, we are checked, disappointed, perplexed. And yet in the second of these Parables there is at one point an apparent retrocession, where all else implies a forward and upward movement of thought. Every one can see how immense an interval there is between the one sheep lost out of a hundred, and the one son out of two, and that the younger—and in the Bible commonly the dearer—of the two. But where is the connecting link? How should the lost piece of money be dearer to the careful housewife than the lost sheep to the faithful shepherd, who knows and cares for every one of his flock and calleth them each by his name? One out of ten marks a great advance upon one out of a hundred indeed; but would it not be less to lose even ten silver coins than a single sheep—less in value, less in love?

The answer to that question, the solution of the difficulty, is to be found in an Eastern custom, the application of which to the Parable before us all commentators on it have, so far as I know, overlooked. The women of Bethlehem, and of other parts of the Holy Land, still wear a row of coins sewn upon their headdress, and pendant over their brows. And the number of the coins is very commonly *ten*, as I, in common with other travellers, have ascertained by counting. The custom reaches back far beyond the Christian era. In all probability, therefore, it was not simply a piece of silver which was lost out of her purse by the

woman of our Parable, but one of the ten precious coins which formed her most cherished ornament; and this would be a loss even more vividly felt than that of the shepherd when one out of his flock of a hundred went astray.

So that immense as is the advance from both the care of the Shepherd for his sheep, and of the pride of the Woman in the burnished coins which gleamed upon her forehead, to the yearning and pitiful love of the Father for his prodigal and selfbanished son, we can nevertheless find a link between the first and last terms of the climax, and trace an advance even between the grief of the Shepherd over his stray sheep, and that of the Woman over her lost coin. A piece of money in her purse might easily be stolen or spent; but a coin from the headdress could not be so much as touched by any stranger, nor even taken from its wearer by her husband unless she cut it off of her own accord and placed it in his hands. It was safe, sacred, dear. It was a strictly personal possession, and might very well be a heirloom—like “the silvers” of the Swiss women—hallowed by many fond and gracious memories.

A. G. WELD.

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### BRIEF NOTICES.

Or making many *commentaries* there is no end,” saith the Preacher, saith every preacher just now, although only from ten to twenty years ago they were so scarce, and, as a rule, of little worth. The fact is, and it is one which calls for recognition, that the publishers are trading on the revived interest in the study of Holy Writ, and striving to turn an honest penny out of it; they are producing Commentaries on the New Testament, or the Old Testament, or the whole Bible, just as they are rivalling one another with “Lives of Christ,” mainly as a business speculation, to “meet a want” as they say. Commentaries made to

order, and made to sell, projected by men of business as matter of business, are not likely to be of the first quality. They may secure a competent editor; and the editor may be happy enough to secure the services of scholars, like Dean Plumptre, Canon Westcott, or Dr. Morison, who will not write on any subject they have not mastered, and who will put their best work into whatever they do; but they must also enlist or press men to write on Scriptures to which they are not drawn by any free movement of their own minds, of which they have made no special or profound study, and in which they take no deep or particular interest. Even if the nominal editor be faithful to his duty, and does not, after lending his name to the enterprise, hand over the work to some official of the counting-house, he is driven to seek the aid of such contributors as these, although he knows full well that their contributions are sure to betray their lack of interest or of sympathy, of competency or of due preparation.

And hence, with all this new world of books before them from which to choose, clergymen and ministers are involved in much perplexity. They may have their rules, and the rules may be good. They may hold that no commentary, by one author, on the whole Bible, or on the whole of either of the Testaments, is likely to be worth much; that no such commentary, even if by many authors, is likely to be good throughout; that it is best and even cheapest in the long run, to buy separate commentaries on single Scriptures; and that even these are worth little if they are not works of love, and of a love which has induced their authors to study and brood over the Writing they have taken in hand year after year. But how, under present conditions, are they to work these and the like rules? They are desperately in need of real helps to the study of the Word; but, for the most part, they have little money to expend on books, especially in the years in which they most require them. What are they to do? If they want Canon Cook on *Job*, or Canon Westcott on *John*, or Canon Evans on *1 Corinthians*, must they purchase the ten volumes of the Speaker's Commentary, or even the odd volumes in which these valuable expositions are contained? If they want Dr. Morison on *Ruth*, or Mr. Cheyne on *Jeremiah*, must they enter on an enterprise of unknown magnitude, order in the long array of the Pulpit Commentary, and load their shelves with the endless homilies by which that commentary is burdened, and which to

real students of the Bible are simply of no worth, or even less? If they want Canon Farrar on *Judges*, or Dean Plumptre on *the Synoptic Gospels*, must they expend eight guineas on Bishop Ellicott's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments, or, here again, put up with that most distressing spectacle to a scholar's eye—odd volumes standing about on his shelves, and for ever mourning the loss of their comrades? Even if they should submit to that misery—and men in want must not be over nice—it would cost them something like five pounds to secure only the seven expositions which have just been named, most of that sum, moreover, going to pay for what they do not want, and may not even care to have. And if five pounds be a serious sum for even clerics to spend on Commentaries, how many of the laity, who need the best help to the right reading of Scripture quite as much, are likely to lay out so much upon them?

How this serious and pressing difficulty is to be solved, it is hard to say. But there are two ways in which many of us might do something to lessen it. It would be well, we think, if those scholars who have made any Scripture a study for years, and who really have something to say on it which will be helpful to their brethren, were resolutely to refuse to contribute to any general Commentary, except on the understanding that they retained the right to republish their contribution in a separate form. And, again, it would be well if critics would deal a little more severely both with those Commentaries which are evidently produced mainly for the private profit of publisher or editor, and with those inadequate or pithless expositions which form too large a portion even of the best Commentaries on the whole Bible which issue from the press. Now that this form of literature has grown so popular, and the motives for producing it are often so unworthy, a severer standard should be applied to it; a sharper line of distinction should be drawn between work of a really high quality, and work which is merely respectable, or which might be allowed to pass without too strict an examination were there not already much better to be had; while indifferent, perfunctory, and, still more, incompetent or unnecessary, work should be visited with the keenest rebuke; for *bonis nocet, quisquis pepercerit malis*.

We have to report that, judged even by the severest standard, *Canon Westcott's Commentary on THE EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN* (London:

Macmillans) possesses almost every quality of first-rate work ; and as it is published in a separate and convenient form, we are bound to give it the warmer welcome. It is based on the same lines with his invaluable exposition of St. John's Gospel. It has been in his thoughts for thirty years. And it is not saying much to say that it is by far the best exposition of these Epistles which we possess. For few Scriptures of the New Testament have been so little or so inadequately commented on. Up to this time, Huther and Haupt have easily taken the first place on our shelves,—indeed there has been little else to consult ; and both of these are naturally better adapted to German than to English wants and modes of thought. Canon Westcott's book, therefore, fills a notable gap, and fills it admirably. In his introduction he goes, with the sound learning and cool judgment to which he has accustomed us, into the critical questions of text, authorship, style, language, etc. In the commentary proper he prints the best Greek text, and illustrates it by notes which not only trace out the general flow of thought, but also "call attention to the minutest points of language, construction, order" which serve to define its meaning. And to this he appends three long and carefully written essays—on "The Two Empires—the Church and the World," "The Gospel of Creation," and "The Relation of Christianity to Art"—which cannot fail to remind the student of the fine dissertations with which Bishop Lightfoot has adorned his Commentaries on St. Paul's Epistles,—essays as erudite and thoughtful, if not so brilliant and powerful, as those masterpieces of our chief Expositor. In fine, he has given us just what we wanted, and almost all that we wanted, on these too long neglected Epistles, the first of which at least is as remarkable for its profundity of thought as for the simple beauty of its form.

In this same category, different as the two books are, both in aim and style, we must also include *Dr. Morison's* Practical Commentary on MATTHEW, of which a new and revised edition has been recently published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton. Our opinion of this masterly work, the value we put on it, is well known. It was, in our judgment, the best Commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel a dozen years ago ; and, despite the almost incredible advance in the art and practice of exposition which has been witnessed since then, it remains the best to this day.



We come now to a work of a more mixed and dubious kind, in which, while there is much that is fairly good, and some which is very good, the good is so blended with the indifferent, and occasionally even with the worthless, as to lie open to the censure with which we commenced. THE OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS, edited by *Bishop Ellicott* (London: Cassells), still disappoints us on the whole, though three volumes of it have now appeared, and in parts still looks like work done to order rather than work freely chosen and enjoyed. Its average level is below that of the New Testament Commentary, published by the same Firm, and under the same Editorial care. It may be doubted even whether it quite comes up to the mark, it certainly does not rise above the mark, of the Cambridge Bible for Schools, a much less expensive and voluminous work. For the most part, indeed, it seems to have no higher aim than the School Bible, although in the Preface to Volume I. the learned Editor promised a much higher aim. Not that it is without its excellencies and attractions. It carefully explains whatever is likely to give the ordinary reader of the Bible pause. It deals fairly well with all minor difficulties, historical, chronological, geographical; but it offers comparatively little help on the graver critical and religious difficulties by which even "English readers," of the Old Testament, if they be at all thoughtful and inquiring, are in these days perplexed. Those who seek for large and generous handling of large moral problems, or adequate treatment of the graver critical difficulties, or an exposition of Scripture which lingers over its greater events and noblest utterances till it draws out and enforces their significance, and the style of which rises with occasion, must look elsewhere. Their quest will not end here.

But if we are to judge this Work, not by the aim announced in the Preface, but by that which its several writers have obviously placed before them, our verdict must be a more favourable one. They have done much good work of the kind indicated above, explaining the sort of difficulty by which an ordinary reader is brought to a stand for want of exact knowledge, e.g. difficulties of name, time, place, sequence. Even from this point of view, however, the work is very unequal. Rev. C. H. Waller's exposition of *Deuteronomy* for instance, Dr. Gardiner's of 2 *Samuel*, Dr. Pope's of *Ezra and Nehemiah*, are much slighter and less satisfactory than Canon Barry's comment on 1 *Kings*, or Rev. C. J.

Ball's on *2 Kings* and *1 and 2 Chronicles*. Canon Barry's work, indeed, within the limits he appears to have set himself, is thoroughly good; while Mr. Ball's is, in our judgment, still better, because more thorough. Canon Spence, again, on *1 Samuel*, aims still higher, and makes his exposition more nearly what we hold that all serious exposition should be—a grave and earnest attempt to bring out the meaning, force, and beauty of the document in hand, as well as to explain its terms and the points by which an unlearned reader is likely to be puzzled and checked.

It is because he, too, aims at this ideal, and goes still farther toward realizing it, that we deem Canon Farrar's exposition of *Judges* to be by far the best commentary in these volumes. He deals frankly and honestly with the grave moral questions which this Scripture constantly raises, and blames what he feels to be wrong in the heroes and judges of Israel as freely as if they were English soldiers or magistrates; while yet he makes all due allowance for the necessarily imperfect morality of the age in which they flourished. And he uses his spiritual insight and imagination on the greater or more picturesque events and utterances recorded in the Book, labouring not without success to call up the men and scenes of that rude and antique age, and to make them live in his readers' minds. Nor is he less careful than his fellow-labourers to remove from their path every stone of stumbling over which the unlettered might trip.

But while there is one section of this work which rises well above its average level, there is another which sinks as far below it. It is not easy, either to account for, or to pardon, such a commentary as that on *Ruth* by Rev. R. Sinker, B.D. For there are at least three or four commentaries on this charming idyll so good as to leave any man without excuse who perpetrates a piece of work so poor, inadequate, and insipid as this. Had Mr. Sinker only consulted, for example, works so accessible and well-known as Dr. Cassell's exposition of *Ruth* in Lange, or Dr. Morison's in the Pulpit Commentary, it would have been simply impossible for him so utterly to have missed the mark.

Two additions have been made to THE PULPIT COMMENTARY (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.) since our last notice of it; and in these we have the same blending of good with bad on which we have already remarked. The exposition of *Jeremiah*, by Rev.

T. K. Cheyne, M.A., is one of the most valuable to be found in this voluminous work. The higher criticism of the Introduction may be questionable to some, cannot fail, indeed, to displease as many as cleave to the traditional views of Scripture. But the commentary itself is so careful, reasonable, scholarly, that even those who most strongly dissent from Mr. Cheyne's critical views will confess it to be most helpful and instructive. And though his style is somewhat stiff and cold, he occasionally rises into a very happy strain. What, for instance, can be more happily expressed than the following appreciation of the plaintive Prophet. "In a quieter age ✓ he might have developed into a great lyric poet. Even as it is he may fairly claim to have written some of the most sympathetic pages of the Old Testament. And yet, his greatest poem is—✓ his life." It is to be lamented, however, that even this excellent bit of work is so overlaid with a mass of homiletical platitudes, by other authors, as that only half the writings of Jeremiah can be commented on even in this large and bulky volume.

The Exposition of *Mark* by Dean Bickersteth might well pair off with Mr. Sinker's on *Ruth*. With such commentaries on the most graphic of the Gospels at command as Dr. Morison's and Dean Plumptre's, there really is neither room nor excuse for work so poor and dull.

The new volume of the Cambridge Bible for Schools is *Obadiah and Jonah*, by the Rev. H. Perowne, D.D., which we can heartily commend. It is a very useful and sensible exposition of these two Minor Prophets, and deals very thoroughly and honestly with the immense difficulties of the later-named of the two, from the orthodox point of view.

The Fernley Lecture of this year, ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND MORAL LAW, by *William Arthur* (London: T. Woolmer), came to hand too late to be noticed in any measure approaching to its deserts; but we cannot forbear saying a word or two about it, and shall hope in various ways to return to it again and again. It is the most masterly and triumphant refutation ✓ of the modern atheistic hypothesis put forward by a few men of science who have dabbled in metaphysics, especially those of the Positivist school, which we have met for many a day. It covers the ground taken by *Almonî Pelouî* in the article on "Miracles" in

our number for September last, but it also covers very much more. Closely thought and tersely expressed, it suggests far more than it affirms; and though the very closeness and compactness of its reasoning may make it somewhat stiff reading for untrained minds, it is nevertheless written with a simplicity and force, and lit up with a wealth of apt illustrations, at times too with quiet touches of humour, which bring it well within the compass of all who care to think while they read, and will afford them a keen and constant delight. We may perhaps best convey our sense of the breadth of its scope and the cogency of its logic if we say that, in less than 250 pages, it unfolds an argument with which men so different as Leslie Stephen, Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, and Dr. Congreve—or whoever may have succeeded him as “the high-priest of Humanity” in the Comtist church—will all of them have to reckon, on pain of finding the ground on which they balance themselves in painfully unstable equilibrium cut from beneath their feet. In fine, our advice to our readers—and we are conscious of doing them good service by giving them the advice, if they need it—is, By all means get this book, and read it, and then read it again and again, until you have made its contents your own. And, for once, we fully intend to take our own advice.

GOOD THE FINAL GOAL OF ILL, *By A Layman* (London: Macmillans). A crude dull book, which will injure rather than serve the cause it is intended to promote.

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## *THE BOOK OF ISAIAH. CHAPTERS XL.-LXVI.*

### III. JEHOVAH GOD OF ISRAEL, THE INCOMPARABLE.

THE question has been put by some regarding the writer of these twenty-seven chapters, whether he is to be called a Prophet or a Poet? That he is a poet of the highest rank almost every line of his writing testifies; and in some parts, as Chapter xlvii., he rises into pure and sustained lyrical expression. The truth, of such importance when we approach the question of Fulfilment, that Prophecy is also Poetry, is nowhere so well illustrated as in this book. Here, as in the case of the older Prophets, poetry and prophecy are still for the most part united, while in some other Prophets, as Habakkuk, they have become disjoined. This author, however, means to be and above all things is a Prophet. He speaks from God, and he speaks to the people of God as a People. He is no mere pastor, devoting himself to the care of individual souls; the community is his listener, and its destinies in the present, and for ever, and its relations to the largest forces in the universe, form his theme. Notwithstanding this, he is to such a degree a Poet that, besides the forms of poetry common to other Prophets, he has introduced another, of which only faint traces are to be seen elsewhere, namely the dramatic. He personifies, and, like the author of the first nine chapters of the Proverbs, introduces his personages—as Zion, Jerusalem, and the Servant of the Lord—speaking in character. This peculiarity throws difficulties in the way of the interpreter, for the more perfect a personification is the more difficult it is to distinguish it from a person, and in some

places where the Servant of the Lord comes forward, we may doubt whether it be a real individual that we hear speaking or only a collective idealized. The only thing that can help us here is to pay the minutest attention to the speaker—not so much to the main sentiment which he expresses as to the incidental allusions which he drops, for in these he will probably betray himself and reveal to us whether his true consciousness be that of an individual or that of a class. It is not quite easy to be a fair interpreter. Complete self-surrender to one's author is required. And this implies not only the positive power of sympathy, but the more difficult negative power of emptying one's mind of prepossessions and feelings which have long filled it, and presenting a *tabula rasa* for the Prophet to write his conceptions upon. Our aim should be to realize to ourselves his mind in its state of poetical intuition and to reflect it simply, asking no questions which the Prophet did not ask. For example, when he hears voices heralding the great King, or others proclaiming, The Word of the Lord shall stand! we are going beyond his intuitions, and sinking into prose besides, when we ask, What voices were they, angelic or prophetic? If we asked the Poet when he says,—

I hear a voice ye cannot hear which says I must not stay,  
I see a hand ye cannot see which beckons me away,

what hand and whose voice it is that he refers to? his answer probably would not increase our self-esteem. And there are many parts of this book where to put such questions is to forget that we are reading a Poet. Such passages are the frequent apostrophes in the book, as to the arm of the Lord (li. 9), to Zion (lii. 1), to heaven and earth and all nature (xliv. 23). To institute grave enquiries from whose mouth it is that such apostrophes come, whether a company of doctors or a chorus of the heavenly host, seems to be to mistake the character of the com-

position before us. At any rate, if some minds are of such a kind that they must have an answer to questions of this sort, they must beware of positively misinterpreting the Prophet, by supposing that he brings upon the stage supernatural *beings*. Such beings seem nowhere introduced.

✓ The "watchmen" over the walls of Jerusalem that give the Lord no rest till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth (lxii. 6), are hardly exalted spirits, having before their eyes a Jerusalem that lies in the supersensible world. The idea of a "Jerusalem above," is one which the Prophet has not yet reached. There is a real and an ideal Jerusalem; but the latter is nothing more than the true conception of the former, with which it constantly interchanges, just as the ideal Jacob does with the actual one. The idea, indeed, is so vividly realized by the Prophet that it becomes to his mind a thing almost objective, which he apostrophizes and introduces as itself speaking, but it is a creation of his own mind, and has no place different from the Jerusalem on Zion hill. This ideal Jerusalem, like all the other ideals of the Prophet, belongs still to the region of pure poetry, though lofty moral poetry; "Jerusalem above" is poetry degenerated into metaphysics.

The "voice" which the Prophet hears proclaiming, "prepare the way of the Lord," is nothing as yet but a voice. The Prophet expresses the idea, altogether a general one, of a herald preceding the advent of the great King. A later prophet, Malachi, gave this general conception a more particular turn; and, as so modified, the idea was seen to find its fulfilment in the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord. But just as this Prophet expresses no more than the general conception of a herald preparing the way of the King, so the King whose way he prepares is Jehovah. It is He who is still the Good Shepherd of his sheep (xl. 11). Subsequent revelation made known also how this was to be realized. The instance is but one out of many which

come under the same general principle, viz. that prophecies regarding Jehovah's revelation of Himself for salvation, and also for judgment, find their fulfilment in his self-unveiling in the Son. Jehovah the Redeemer and Judge is God manifest in the Son. Such an analysis of the idea of God was not yet effected by the Prophet, and such a development in the economy of God's self-manifestation remained hidden from him. The Christology of the Prophet runs on two lines, though to the Prophet himself neither of the lines was strictly Christological or Messianic in the usual sense. One line is formed by statements made regarding Jehovah's revelation of Himself and of his glory, of his saving his people, of his abiding among them for ever and feeding them like a flock. The identification of the voice crying in the wilderness with John, is an example how the early Christian mind felt that all such predictions of Jehovah's manifestation of Himself had been fulfilled in Christ. Echoes of this Prophet's words are heard everywhere in the New Testament. His saying that Jerusalem's "warfare is fulfilled," seems repeated in St. Paul's "when the fulness of time was come." "His glory shall be revealed" is heard over again in St. John's "we beheld his glory," "he manifested forth his glory"; in the "brightness of his glory" of the Hebrews, and in St. Paul's "glory of God in the face of Christ;" and much besides, as the "good Shepherd" of the fourth Gospel. The other Christological line is made up of those statements that bear reference to the Servant of the Lord, his being upheld of God, endowed with God's Spirit, sent to preach good tidings unto the poor, his bearing the sins of the people and being the light of the Gentiles. How profoundly these passages affected the mind of Jesus Himself, and how nearly He saw in the Prophet's picture of the Servant the counterpart of his own consciousness, is evident from the Gospels. — In such passages, as Delitzsch remarks, we have more pro-



*Read* found Christological conceptions than in any other part of Scripture. Of two things the Christian mind has always remained sure, and it is never likely to lose hold of them, whatever differences of view may prevail in other respects in regard to the Prophet's lofty ideal; these are, first, that the features of the Servant of the Lord as the Prophet delineated them, have appeared in Christ, and the Servant's work as he sketched it has been accomplished by Him; and, second, that the higher Wisdom which was directing the progress of redemption towards its goal, the death of the Son, with a march all too slow to meet the aspirations of some spirits in Israel, but almost too rapid for the backwardness of the mass, was at the same time causing this great event which was to come to illumine the heavens with its reflection beforehand, and leading the Prophet to throw out thoughts which suggested the event and prepared for it. The first of these truths is testified to by the consciousness of Christ Himself, and the second by the Messianic beliefs and hopes current among the people even before He put forth any claims to be the Messiah. Yet these truths being admitted, or rather insisted upon, there is still much room for enquiring what the Prophet's precise conceptions were. These conceptions cannot but bear traces of limitation, imposed on them by the age in which he lived, and have been far transcended on every side by the reality. The peculiar point, however, is that the Prophet's lofty ideal of the Servant has little in common with the Messianic idea of other prophecies. This idea is that of a King of the house of David (Isa. ix. 7; Mic. v. 2; Zech. ix. 9; Ps. ii. etc.). But such a royal personage has no place in these twenty-seven chapters. If David be a single time referred to in the prophecy, it is not one of his descendants, but the People, that enters into the inheritance of the "sure mercies" covenanted to him, and assumes the leadership of the nations which he was promised (Chap.

- lv. 5; Ps. xviii. 43). Even if we supposed that the Prophet conceived the Servant as an individual—a supposition which many consider difficult to make—there is no evidence that he identified him with the ideal King of other prophecies.
- ✓ This idea of the King, indeed, has entirely disappeared, and a conception altogether different has taken its place.

These remarks in some measure anticipate what should come later, but some of them were necessary to supplement the exposition of Chapter xl. verses 1-11 given in a former article. The thread of that article may now be resumed.

- The Prophet's horizon is bounded by the restoration from exile. Between him and that event there are distinct occurrences, great steps towards the event; after it no occurrences take place: the restoration is the initiation of the perfect kingdom of God. Even the occurrences that lie between him and this event the Prophet invests with an ideal grandeur, but after this event he becomes wholly
- ✓ ideal. He works with his religious conceptions alone.
- ✓ Out of these he constructs the kingdom of God in its final form (Chaps. lx.-lxii.). That this kingdom of God is considered a kingdom on earth, and that, as the Prophet fashions it, it seems a singular mixing up of the miraculous and the natural, of what we suppose to be heaven and what we know to be earth, cannot lead us astray as to his general conception, or prevent our perceiving that it is his final form of the kingdom of God that he is presenting. It is not, however, with this final form, but with the events that precede it and that introduce it, that we are concerned in the meantime; only these events, or at least the way in which the Prophet regards them, cannot be understood in the remotest way, unless we consider them to be the immediate antecedents to the perfect form of God's kingdom.

The phenomena and forces which filled and made up the Prophet's world have been alluded to, and are familiar.

They were, Jehovah, God alone, and the false gods; the People of God, in bondage to that mighty world-empire which was but an incarnation of its own idolatry; the irresistible career of Cyrus, and the universal prostration of the idol-worshipping nations before him. These are the forces out of whose conflict has to arise the universal kingdom of the Lord. To many an eye the world might have seemed V a chaos, as it did fill many of the Prophet's contemporaries with despair. They shared in the alarm of the other nations at the advance of Cyrus, fearing he might but forge heavier chains for them than those that now bound them (xliv. 8). In the events transpiring around them they could perceive no trace of a ruling God, and to none of them did the arm of the Lord make itself apparent (liii. 1). Their way was hid, and thick darkness touched their faces (xlii. 16). Querulousness and the captiousness of despair took possession of them; "Woe to him that striveth with his Maker! shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?" (xlv. 9); they were wholly downcast and paralysed: "Why, when I am come, is there no man; when I call is there none that answereth?" (i. 2). Their God had forsaken them, and they trembled before the fury of the oppressor (xlix. 14, li. 13). But though to many minds in Israel all things might appear in confusion and turning to chaos, to no prophet of Jehovah could the world V ever appear a chaos. It was not a chaos, though it might present a hard problem. It was a divine drama that was being played, complicated and extended, and only a prophet of the Lord could foresee how it would develop itself. He could foresee because to his mind the principal, or rather the only, actor in the drama was Jehovah Himself. And his foresight of it is little but his conception of Jehovah, of what He is and what his purposes are because He is who He is, flung into the wrestling mass of principles and forces which he perceived around him. The thought

of Jehovah, like the morning light falling upon the face of the earth in darkness, turns the wild confusion into order. Under the prophet's eye there starts, and proceeds step by step, the evolution which ushers in the kingdom. This evolution has two sides, an outer and an inner; but the power moving and operating in both is Jehovah, God of Israel. The Prophet's conception of the Lord gives unity to the movements and interprets them.

For, to take the outward evolution first, this Cyrus who was spreading consternation among the heathen, treading down kings and making their sword like dust and their bow  
 ✓ like the driven stubble (xli. 2), and exciting terror in the breasts even of the captives, was Jehovah's instrument, whom He had raised up and called from the East, and who had come, obedient to his bidding (xli. 2, 25); and his raising him up was not a mere display of power or an act of vengeance, but a great operation within the sphere of his purpose of salvation: "I have raised him up *in righteousness*, he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives" (xlv. 13). The Prophet does not go beyond other prophets when he expresses the mere conception that Cyrus was Jehovah's instrument, whom He made use of for effecting his purposes with his people. For Isaiah had already named the Assyrian the "rod of Jehovah's anger," whom He used, as a passive instrument in his hands, wherewith to chastise his people, so passive that when he presumed to have thoughts and purposes of his own he was behaving as madly and monstrously as if "the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift itself as if it were no wood!" (x. 15). And in Jeremiah the Lord speaks of "Nebuchadnezzar my servant," and assigns to him as part of the service which he  
 ✓ shall perform the destruction of the idolatries of Egypt (xxv. 9, xliii. 12); the latter conception one which is undoubtedly analogous to that of the Prophet whom we are

studying. But in two particulars this Prophet goes beyond others; first, in the vast scope of the task which he assigns to Cyrus and in the constructive character of this task; for his mission is twofold, one part of it being to crush the heathen world-power, and thereby abolish idolatry and open the way for the expansion of "judgment" or the true religion; and the other being to set free the Lord's captives and build anew his temple, that the law might go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem: and, second, in the close intimacy with Jehovah Himself into which He brings the Persian hero, agreeably to the constructive nature of his operations in behalf of God's people, while the Assyrian and Babylonian were mere instruments of destruction used by Jehovah in his anger, and which He flung away or broke to pieces like a rod when his purpose was served with it. Cyrus is no mere instrument, he is<sup>V</sup> the Lord's "anointed," whose right hand He holds (xlv. 1), whom He "loveth" (xlviii. 14), whom He goes before and prospers, whom He called by name when he did not know Him (xlv. 4), and who shall even call on his name (xli. 25). These last words suggest one of the most interesting questions that these remarkable prophecies raise, the question, what thoughts the Prophet had of the religious position of Cyrus, what hopes he entertained of him, and whether he anticipated that the conqueror would realize that it was the God of Israel who was crowning his arms with victory, and that he might be won over to the religion of Jehovah? No thought was too lofty or too wide for the<sup>V</sup> Prophet in the passion of enthusiasm which the vision of a restored nation and a regenerated world raised within him. And, obviously, if such a great thought occurred to him, it would facilitate to his mind the solution of the great problem which above all attracted his thoughts, how the nations could be gained over to the true faith, and the kingdoms of the nations become the kingdom of the Lord.

- ✓ Such a great work could not be accomplished by Cyrus, for this was the task assigned to another who alone could accomplish it, the Servant of the Lord (xlii. 2), as it could be effected not by conquest or strife, but by methods very different, by the unwearied gentleness of one who should not cry nor lift up nor let his voice be heard in the streets. Yet how mighty an impulse the adhesion of Cyrus might give to such a work, whether by his example or his influence!

In this way what might be called the external frame of the Prophet's dream of the universal kingdom of the Lord was set up—the idolatrous empire was laid low, the idols demonstrated to be vanity (xli. 29), those that served graven images turned back and put to shame (xli. 17), the ransomed of the Lord restored to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads (li. 11), and Israel saved with an eternal salvation (xlv. 17). Such language is proof enough how ill-suited such a phrase as "external frame" is to express the Prophet's conception. The work of Cyrus was in truth the work of Jehovah; its whole significance to the Prophet lay in its being a religious work, a great stride taken by the kingdom of the Lord towards its full victory over all that was evil and false. Nothing could demonstrate how entirely the religious idea of it dominated the Prophet's mind so much as his eagerness to bring Cyrus, the great agent who was accomplishing it, himself into true relations to the omnipotent Redeemer of Israel and God over all. If the Prophet's hopes in regard to the Persian king were somewhat adventurous and but dreams, they were very

✓ profound dreams, significant enough to us of the scope and the complexion of the conceptions which he cherished. And, to come down from them to modern ground, it is perhaps possible to learn from them something pertinent to ourselves. If they must be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord (lii. 11), even those that guide the external fortunes

of the kingdom of God must perform their task with a mind attuned to his.

But, second, there is also a process of internal evolution needful to realize the universal kingdom of the Lord. The Prophet's idea is complete; he has comprehended the problem in all its details. The work of Cyrus in the world only overthrows heathenism and eternally discredits and puts to shame the idols and the idolators. This is but a negative effect. The nations are not thereby enlightened ✓ in the knowledge of the true God and "judgment." It is the mission of the Servant of the Lord "to bring forth judgment" to the Gentiles, and the isles shall wait for his law. Not to raise the question of the Servant here, whether he be Israel or another, the way in which the Prophet himself takes up his own words towards the end of his prophecy, and, speaking of Israel restored, says, "The Gentiles shall come to thy light" (lx. 3), shews that at any rate the Servant shall come into communion with the Gentiles through Israel redeemed, and, in this way, become their "light." Any missionary enterprises of individuals, however exalted, could not occur to the Prophet. Like all prophets of the Old Testament, he ✓ operates with nations and peoples. And if the nations are to receive "light" through Israel, it will be through Israel, again an imposing People before the world's eyes, just as the Law goes forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. ii). All this clearly enough teaches what the Prophet has in view when he speaks of the restoration of Israel. It is no mere return of a few or even many exiles from Babylon. It is the reconstruction of the People in its former integrity, and the realizing in it of its ideal as the bearer of God's revelation in the world. But this implies a great internal revolution in Israel itself, a complete regeneration, a resurrection to life and gathering together, member to member, of all the

fragments of the nation scattered in every land,—a verification of the vision of another prophet when he saw bone come to his bone, and the spirit enter into them, and they stood up a very great army (Ezek. xxxvii.). It is in treating of this internal change in Israel itself that the Prophet reveals his profoundest conceptions, conceptions hardly hinted at by other prophets, and bequeaths his richest legacy to the religious thought of mankind. Yet, as before, it is the thought of Jehovah, God of Israel, that explains this process of regeneration to the mind of the Prophet, and gives unity to it.

For, first, Jehovah, notwithstanding all that might seem to go against it, is still the God of Israel. His first words in this Prophecy are, *Comfort ye my People*. He has chosen Israel, and not cast them off (xli. 9). He asks evidence of any legal severance from his People that might seem valid: “Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, with which I sent her away?” (l. 1). In answer to Zion’s desponding cry, *The Lord hath forgotten me*, He replies, “Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (xlix. 16). This whole episode of his anger against his people and return to them is like the “waters of Noah” to Him: “As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee” (liv. 9). He blots out their transgressions of his free mercy and for his “name’s sake” (xliii. 25), and because He “loved” them (xliii. 4). God over all, He will make all “his hills” a way for them (xlix. 11), and command the ends of the earth to restore them: “I will say to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back.” And He will endow them with the principle of a new life: “I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed.”

Nevertheless, as He employed Cyrus “his shepherd” in gathering his scattered flock together, and reconstructing



the external framework of his kingdom, He employs another agent in kindling within them the glow of a new faith in Himself that shall unify them in spirit. This agent is the "Servant of the Lord." The very name given to this lofty ideal Figure, *servant*, indicates that he is designed to execute some great work for the Lord. His work indeed is vast, co-extensive with his title of servant "of the Lord," being none other in its widest view than to fulfil the purpose of Jehovah, God over all, with Jew and Gentile—to be a covenant of the People to restore the tribes of Jacob, and to be thus the light of the Gentiles. Whatever may be meant by the servant being "a covenant," there can be no doubt of what "the People" means. It is all Israel. Delitzsch (with whom Mr. Cheyne agrees), arguing in behalf of the view that the Servant is an individual, maintains that the covenant which the Servant is or mediates is made with the true "spiritual" Israel. Of course it is a truism that the covenant cannot be made with those who will have none of it—There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked; but the terms which the Prophet employs, such as "the People" "Israel," "the tribes of Jacob," and particularly such words as "every one that is called by my name" (*i.e.* belongs to the people of Jehovah, xliii. 7), and such like, indicate sufficiently the nature of the Prophet's hopes; and he states elsewhere with decisive plainness who it is that he considers the subjects of the new covenant: "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters . . . Incline your ear and come unto me, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. . . . Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him" (chap. lv.). And then follows the jubilee of all nature over the redemption, not of those now the 'spiritual' Israel, but of Israel as a whole

(ver. 12, 13), for the Prophet's hope, like that of the Apostle Paul, is that "all Israel" shall be saved.

The picture which the Prophet gives of the Servant in the exercise of his task of "restoring the tribes of Jacob" is strange and attractive. The blindness of the People and their insusceptibility; their captious criticism of the events of providence and the ways of God, and the counter-schemes of their own which they prosecuted (l. 11, lv. 8); their harsh treatment of the Servant of the Lord, and utter misconception of what he was, which they afterward penitently confess (l. 4-9, liii. 1-6); his own momentary despondency, flashing up again into enthusiasm as he remembers the nearness of Him that justifies him (xlix. 4, l. 9); his making his soul an offering and his rising again among or in the People, and the prospering of the work of the Lord in his hand—all this and much more is described by the Prophet, and has formed a subject of wonder and meditation to the Church of all ages. We allude to it here merely in order to sketch the outline of the Prophet's scheme of the restitution of all things. It may be hazardous to fix upon any particular thought in the Prophet's mind, and decide that this thought was the germ out of which all his other thoughts grew; yet we can hardly be wrong in regarding his thought of Jehovah as the great idea which gave unity at least to all his other conceptions, and led his mind to the scheme which has just been described. That scheme in few words was this. Jehovah, God of Israel, is God alone. Being so, the nations are related to Him no less than Israel. As the one true God He must manifest Himself to be so, and destroy all else that is called God: "My glory I will not give to another, nor my praise to graven images" (xlii. 8); "I have sworn by myself that to me every knee shall bow" (xlv. 23). Yet, though God over all, and though He is about to manifest Himself to be so, He cannot

cease to be the God of Israel. Now also this relation is about to be fully manifested. Through his Servant He will turn the hearts of his People to Himself, and, gathering them into one from all lands, will appear in his glory among them. The dualism of Jehovah's relation as God alone to all and his particular relation to Israel, the Prophet removes by making the particular relation the means whereby the universal one is realized. Israel redeemed and restored becomes the "light" of the Gentiles.

✓ This task is assigned to the Servant of the Lord; but, as has been said, whoever we may conclude the Servant to be, he reaches the nations through Israel restored. His work in Israel itself is immediate; among the nations it is mediated through the People of God, now become true to their ideal.

Such is a bare skeleton of the thoughts which the Prophet preaches to his people. The discourses in which he develops these ideas compose his great prophecy. Commentators differ much as to the limits of these discourses. In some cases a division presents itself naturally, but for the most part the stream flows on without interruption. The various divisions proposed have been provided by their authors with headings, expressing the main idea of the respective sections. Such inscriptions are more or less appropriate. It can hardly be doubted, we think, that the great conception of the Prophecy is, Jehovah, God of Israel. This conception naturally suggests both combinations and antitheses. In the first six or seven chapters of the Prophecy the antithesis prevails; Jehovah is spoken of more as God alone in opposition to idols, as Creator and the like, and in general more on the abstract and external side of his Being. In the middle chapters his attributes as Redeemer of Israel, his love and grace and pardoning mercy, are dwelt upon. In these chapters the argument for, or rather the exhibition of, his sole

Godhead, is departed from, having been exhausted in the early chapters. To exhibit the Prophet's teaching his whole prophecy would have to be copied out. An example may be given in Chapter xl. 12-31, which might be inscribed, *Jehovah, God of Israel, the Incomparable.*

12 Who measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? 13 Who directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor taught him? 14 With whom took he counsel and who instructed him? . . . 15 Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold he taketh up (sustaineth) the isles as a very little thing. 16 And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him; they are counted by him as of nothing and vanity.

18 *To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?*

19 The idol—a workman casteth it, and a goldsmith overlayeth it with gold, and worketh silver chains. 20 He that is too impoverished for such an oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to set up an idol that shall not totter. 21 Do ye not know? will ye not hear? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. 23 That bringeth princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. 24 Hardly are they planted; hardly are they sown; hardly hath their stock taken root in the earth, when he also bloweth upon them and they wither and the whirlwind taketh them away as stubble.

25 *To whom then will ye liken me, that I should be equal to him? saith the Holy One.*

26 Lift up your eyes on high and see! Who created these? that bringeth out their host by number and calleth them all

by name ; by the greatness of his might and the strength of his power not one is missing.

27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my right is passed away from my God? 28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? an everlasting God is the Lord, creator of the ends of the earth ; he fainteth not, neither is weary ; there is no searching of his understanding. 29 He giveth power to the faint, and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. 30 And though youths faint and be weary, and young men utterly fall ; 31 yet they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary ; they shall walk and not faint.

The passage is the first homily of Comfort to the people of God, shewing them what He is who is God of Israel. It sustains the great promises of Chapter xl. verses 1-11, exhibiting how Jehovah, being such as He is, can effect them, and that in his being such as He is lies the necessity of their being effected. The main idea is the immeasurable power and intelligence of Jehovah, who works with the infinite masses of the material universe as men do with the smallest things, who with his breath withers up and scatters like dust before the wind the mightiest combinations of human power in empires and states, and compared to whom all created things, whether the nations or the world, are as nothing. The delineation is in the main abstract, simply exhibiting the Greatness of Jehovah, a thing in which the Prophet delights, the application or appeal to Israel founded on the delineation being reserved for the concluding verses. The passage consists of three parts. As the Prophet develops his conception of Jehovah, the idea grows in his own mind, acquiring such force at last that he breaks out into the exclamation, "To whom then will ye liken God?" (ver. 18). This suggests the idea of the idol, also called God, and starting with this the Prophet runs his idea of Jehovah through a new development, this time referring

more to his rule among the nations, as the former verses referred to his creative power, till again his idea overmasters him, and he exclaims in Jehovah's name, "To whom then will ye liken me?" (ver. 25), rounding off his conception by a reference to the starry heavens, the host of Jehovah, who brings them forth on their nightly parade, and at whose roll-call not one is missing. And, finally, the application is made to Israel: "How sayest thou, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord? Jehovah is the strong and the giver of strength; they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."

Verse 12 expresses Jehovah's immeasurable Greatness. The reference in the words, "Who measured?" is to creation. The question does not need to be answered: none but Jehovah. The meaning rather is, What is One who measured the waters in the hollow of his hand! It is assumed that Jehovah is Creator, and the question is designed merely to bring vividly before the mind the Greatness of One who measured, etc. The point lies in the smallness of the measures, the hollow of the hand, the span, the tierce (third part of an ephah) and scales, along with the infinite magnitude of the things measured. Man can hold a few drops in his palm, Jehovah gathers into *his* the oceans. With these small measures of his, measures which men use for the littlest things, Jehovah measures the immeasurable masses of the universe. What is expressed is the Greatness, we might almost say the magnitude or bulk, of Jehovah. It might be that under weighing and measuring is also suggested the order, the fixed proportion, the embodiment of rhythm and number in the universe. This is doubtful. The idea rather is, that immense as the masses of the material world seem to men, they are known to Jehovah and were fixed by Him, and that He manipulates them as men do the smallest things.

Verses 13, 14 deal with Jehovah's absoluteness and suffi-

ciency in Himself. In his work of Creation He was alone. The question, Who directed the Spirit of the Lord? differs from the last question. The answer is: None. And as the former question brought out the physical greatness of Jehovah, this one suggests his incalculable mental power. Unaided, with no suggestion from another, He projected, with no counsellor He executed, the mighty works of creation. The question in these verses is subordinate to that in verse 12, the two questions bringing out the might and wisdom of the Creator, the absolute greatness and self-sufficient mind of Jehovah.

Verses 15-17 set forth the inappreciableness to Him, or in comparison of Him, of all that exists. The idea throughout is Jehovah's greatness, and the impression of it increases in intensity. The nations to Him are as a drop on or in a bucket to him who carries it,—inappreciable in its weight; or as the fine dust on the balance, which does nothing to incline it either way. The reference in the words "the nations" and his "taking up" the isles or countries is not to his providential rule of them, but to his sustaining them, or to his exerting his power on them were He to do so. They are as a grain of dust as He upholds them or as He wields them.

And were a sacrifice to be made to Him, not to say that would be worthy, but that would be to Him an offering at all, a thing to which such a name could be given, Lebanon would not suffice for wood, nor all its beasts for a holocaust—so transcendent in magnitude is the God of Israel. Nay, so great is He that, in comparison of Him, or rather from his point of view, all nations are as *nothing*; before his magnitude, or, to Him when He thinks of Himself, all things that exist cease and recede into the sphere of nothingness.

Carried away by his own conception of Jehovah, the Prophet exclaims, To whom then will ye liken God?

The words, What likeness will ye compare unto Him? mean, What object can ye set over against Him as like Him or comparable to Him? The words, of course, do not mean, What representation can ye make of Him? or, Can ye represent Him under any form? The idea expressed is that of his incomparableness, his uniqueness and absolute transcendence. This thought, however, of the transcendent greatness of Jehovah, God of Israel, suggests the idol, which also bears the name of God. But the idol is not referred to in order to ask, Is the idol a fit representation of Him? There is no reference here to the representation of Jehovah under forms. The antithesis is expressed between the God of Israel and all that otherwise is named God. The Prophet is not assailing idolatry in Israel, but idolatry in itself. He is moving among principles, we might almost say dogmas. The magnitude of the true God suggests the littleness of the idol-god. *He* is incomparable; *it* is by no means so. Its genesis and manufacture are known. It is a cast metal, gilt article, upheld with chains lest it should totter and tumble to the ground. Or it is a hardwood tree fashioned into a block by a cunning workman.

With a feeling deepened by his own sarcastic treatment of the idol, the Prophet returns to his thought of the true God, astonished at the blindness and insensibility of mankind, who close their eyes and ears to that which the world from its foundations declares of God, and what has been handed down from all time regarding Him (ver. 21), and what may be seen of Him in his rule of the nations—He who from his seat on high upon the circle of the earth, the heavenly arch that overspans the earth, looks down on puny men as grasshoppers, and with his breath withers and blows away their most powerful combinations in empires and armies, dissolving them into their elements and scattering them abroad to enter into new forms, as the hot wind





of the desert withers up the luxuriant plant and scatters its dust afar (ver. 22-24). And such a thought forces once more to expression the exclamation, To whom then will ye liken the Holy One? And, finally, with an instance good for all, the Prophet rounds off his delineation of the Greatness of Jehovah by pointing men's eyes to the heavens, to the glittering parade of the starry host, which Jehovah leads forth, and who come, each one answering to the call, and not one lacking (ver. 25, 26).

Verses 27-31 give the application to Israel. Such is the God of Israel; how shall Israel despond? or how think that this God is unobservant of her history and fate, or wearied with the rule of the world and unable to give heed to its demands, or that his understanding fails to grasp the right moment for interference or the right means to success. An "everlasting" God is Jehovah, and such a word carries all with it. He is alone strong, and the source of strength—He giveth power to the faint. That which is strongest and most beautiful in its strength among men, faints and utterly falls; they that wait on Jehovah gather in Him fresh strength.

The cure for religious despondency is in the thought of God. Israel, a solitary slave in Babylon, kept murmuring, muttering to herself, My way is hid from the Lord—my condition, my fate, and manner of being treated, is unobserved by Him. Either He cannot see it or He cares not to look at it. And my judgment is passed away from my God—my right He has let slip from Him and no more upholds; that judgment which should be done me, or at least used to be done for me, the right against foes and protection from the heathen, is no longer afforded. Israel thought she was fallen out of the view of her God, who was absorbed with other interests, or unable to grasp and unite in his hand all the complex forces of the world. To all this the Prophet replies, An everlasting God is Jehovah.

He is the strong One, and they that wait on Him become partakers of his strength.

✓ All strength which is not Divine is weakness. Natural strength has no permanence—the youths faint and become weary. It is a great mystery to us, this fainting and wearying of the youths,—premature death, the exhaustion and burning out of greatly endowed, but passionate natures, that utterly fall. The expenditure of life in the universe is incalculable. Nature is prodigal of her means. Her greatest promises are those oftenest unfulfilled. It is the “choice young men” as the word means, that weary. We have seen some young spirit endowed with the greatest gifts rise like a star upon the horizon, and move among other lights in the sky, easily to be detected from all others, with a light like none else, a colour of luminousness peculiar to himself, which the world had seldom seen and longed to retain; but just when the eyes of many worshippers were being turned to it, it was seen to become troubled or to shoot away into the darkness. And there is another faintness that comes over the strong, a weariness with life as unsatisfying, which makes them fling aside their weapons, and retire from the strife, crying,—

“Death is the end of life: Ah, why should life all labour be?”

✓ They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. It may not be explainable, but perhaps must be left as a fact of experience.

When it is said, “they shall mount as eagles,” “they shall run,” and “walk,” it is scarcely meant that some shall “mount” and others “run” and “walk.” All shall ✓ do all, each in its own time. They shall mount with wings like eagles, soaring in moments of high thought and feeling, with strong wing and eagle eye, to God Himself. They shall run and not be weary; in the struggle of life, in the race and battle, they shall be girt and strong, and where

others stumble or fall off the course they shall be victorious. In the crisis, in the hurried moment of swift decision, and prompt action, they are strong. And they shall also walk and not faint. In the dull weary journey of life, in its monotonous, hard, uphill, uninteresting road, when the way to come is like the way gone, hard, uphill, and monotonous, in the dull grey walk of life, they faint not.

These three, "mount," "run," "walk," might seem a falling climax, but perhaps they are not. It is easier to mount heavenward, in short, rapid, far-piercing flights of thought direct as it were to the throne of God, than to run the race of life, the hot keenly contested struggle with passion or the world or men. And this is easier than the walk, the lonely, lifelong, monotonous track, when one is cast quite on himself, without excitement or emulation, or immediate gain or prize. It is easier to weather the storm, than to endure and wait when one is becalmed upon the sea of life. To live an ordinary life well is the greatest of all deeds.

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A. B. DAVIDSON.

## THE WORTH OF SPARROWS.

MATTHEW x. 29-31 ; LUKE xii. 6, 7.

THERE is no quality which Christ required of his disciples in a higher degree, or sought more earnestly to cultivate in them, than that of *courage*. In "the man Christ Jesus" this attribute of our nature (which through the masculine speech of Rome has given its name to *virtue*, as being the proper distinction and excellence of a *man*) attains its perfect, because its most purely moral, exhibition and expression. And the truest courage, if its type be in Him, finds its source and its stay in faith in the living God. The highest manliness is one with godliness.

History, as we read it, entirely confirms the teaching of our Lord. Faith has proved itself to be the root of the most manful and enduring courage, of all the heroic virtues. Where it decays and ceases to be a practical power in society, experience leads us to anticipate a lowering of moral energy, a loss of the buoyancy and elastic vigour of resolution which the higher tasks of life demand, of that self-possessed and stedfast patience which, through all the adverse gales of fortune,

" 'Bates not one jot  
Of heart or hope ; but still bears up, and steers  
Right onward."

Christian courage is called forth by devotion to a spiritual and enduring object that enlists all the powers of the soul in its pursuit,—a devotion animated by an absorbing personal affection, and sustained by a full confidence in the ultimate attainment of its end : it is the high ardour and the brave endurance of faith, of love, of hope. " Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; " " He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me " ; " Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom ; " " Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away " :—in such sentences as these the self-devotion of Christ's servants finds its incentive and its warrant. No other moral leader has ever been able to address his followers in language such as this. Nor has any principle been discovered which, as a spring of spiritual energy—of the power to toil, to suffer, and to dare, in the service of mankind and in the pursuit of the soul's highest good—is in any way equal to that personal loyalty to a Divine Lord, which these words imply in those who heartily believe them.

And yet, while the object which Christ sets before his disciples is so transcendent, and the principles with which He seeks to inspire them are so spiritual, He illustrates

and applies them in a manner the most homely and practical. His mind moves with perfect ease and freedom from this side to that, and from that to this, of the veil that parts us from the unseen. His vision of the spiritual world is unlike that of the poet's eye, "in a fine frenzy rolling," that "glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven." It is calm and clear, the full and steady gaze of One who contemplates a near, abiding, and familiar reality. He sees heaven as "the Son of man who is in heaven." And when He tells us of "earthly things," inviting us, as we may say, to follow and to test Him, there is in his treatment of them a clearness of insight, a delicacy of touch, a mastery of the sober facts of life as they lay around Him, which prepare us to trust Him in that higher range of "heavenly things" up to which He leads us.<sup>1</sup> He wins our confidence as Son of Man, that He may command our homage as Son of God. We come to see that it is just because He is so familiar with "heavenly things" that He reads the meaning of "earthly things" so truly. And this "gathering into one" of the earthly and the heavenly, the human and the Divine, this perfect blending of the natural and the supernatural in Jesus Christ, is that which in the end most fully satisfies our faith, and which gives to Christian truth its central position and fixed stability amid the shifting movements of thought and the ebb and flow of human affairs.

The saying of Christ, recorded in both the First and Third Gospels,<sup>2</sup> on which this Paper is based, is a striking

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 9-18; i. 47-51.

<sup>2</sup> It is very probable that particular sayings of our Lord of a proverbial or parabolic character, such as those of Matthew x. 27 and 29 (Luke xii. 3, 6) were reiterated on different occasions, with varying turns of expression; just as symbolic actions (e.g. *the cleansing of the temple*) may have been repeated, if circumstances called for the repetition. But one can hardly suppose that a *continued discourse*, such as that of Matthew x. 26-33 (Luke xii. 2-9) was delivered a second time in almost the same words. This being assumed, there can be little doubt that St. Luke reproduces more correctly the order and

example of this unique characteristic of his teaching. It brings together in one sentence God—and the sparrow; the immortal soul with its life beyond the reach of “them that kill the body”—and the hairs of our head, practically numberless to us, yet all numbered by our Father in heaven; and it does this without the slightest shock of strangeness or jar of incongruity. And this union of lowliness and grandeur, of sublimity and homeliness, lends to our Master’s “Fear not” a power to soothe and to encourage such as no other words possess.

It is significant that Christ marked with so much interest the more lowly and homely of the creatures around us. He does not say, “Consider the eagle”—the monarch of the air, the symbol of empire and of victory; or, “Consider the nightingale,” the sweet Eastern bulbul, that floods the Jordan banks and the shores of Gennesaret with its passionate music; but, “Consider the raven”—a fowl of ill-omen and unattractive to the eye, or draws attention to the sparrow, a very Pariah amongst the feathered tribes! It is like his preference for publicans and sinners over the lordly Pharisee and learned Scribe. Who but Jesus would have dreamed of getting poetry and theology out of ravens and sparrows! Who but He would have compared Himself, as He did in the most pathetic utterance of his life, to a hen vainly calling her heedless brood to the shelter of her wings! But this fashion of speech became Him who was “meek and lowly in heart”; and who, moreover, being one with the Author of Nature, interprets best her deepest and simplest lessons. Of Him

connection of the discourses recorded in common by the two Evangelists. St. Matthew’s memory is *theological* rather than *historical* in its bias. The “sayings” of Christ, on which he loves to dwell, have grouped themselves in his mind around certain great themes of discourse, with which his attention is absorbed. “Luke is like a botanist, who delights to study each flower in the very spot where it has sprung up, and amidst its native surroundings. Matthew resembles the gardener, who is culling splendid bouquets, for some special purpose which he has in view” (Godet, *New Test. Studies*, p. 16, Eng. Tr.).

most of all we should expect the words of our English poet of Nature to be true :

"To me the meanest flower that blows, can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

That Christ should thus have had an eye and a heart for "the lilies" and "the ravens," for sparrows and chickens, being what He was, and having such an errand in this world as He had, is a fact full of instruction in itself, and profoundly reassuring as an index to the mind of God. Such language from his lips should help to correct our pride and thoughtlessness, and teach us a religion more considerate and humane, more open-eyed to the kindly and affecting aspects of the daily life of Nature ; while it serves to enlarge and deepen our views of the universal providence of God.

And what a revelation Christ's saying respecting the sparrows gives us of the working of that Providence ! What an omniscience and omnipresence it implies ! He declares that God actually notices and cares for every little feathered thing that flits twittering through the air, or hops from bough to bough in innocent and happy freedom, or pipes its solitary note "alone upon the house-top." And when the tiny creature falls, struck by stick or shot or stone, "it does not fall on the ground," He says, "*without your Father.*" Nay, even as it hangs in the poulterer's stall, strung up with fifty others, waiting for the purchaser, poor almost as itself, who can find the farthing needed to buy two of them,<sup>1</sup> still it is not "forgotten before God." The pitiful little tragedy, from beginning to end, is watched and recorded by the Supreme Mind ! If He observes all that, what is there which He overlooks ! If He "caters providently for the sparrow," and interests Himself in its fate, how solicitous his care

<sup>1</sup> Sparrows, and small birds of similar kinds, are still a common article of food amongst the poor in Palestine. See Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.

for all his living creatures! How minute and delicate and sympathetic, as well as far-reaching and omnipotent, the oversight of his providence, which is not less special than general, not less particular than it is universal.

There are those, indeed, amongst ourselves who do "consider the ravens" and the sparrows, and everything that lives and grows, with the keenest and often the most reverent interest. Ornithology alone has become a science in itself, to which a student of Nature might fittingly give the labour of a life-time. For modern naturalists have discovered how marvellous these common creatures are—especially the commonest and most familiar of them; how exquisite is the mechanism of their organs; what an endless variety of adaptations their structure and their habits present; what subtle and profound laws connect every part of every living thing with every other part and with the elements in which it lives, and with its kind, with the whole scheme of nature to which it belongs, and with the buried worlds beneath our feet which are already yielding up their dead. And their teaching may help us, in some degree, to understand why God should have such regard even to a single sparrow. If his creation is so intimately bound together in every part as biological science seems to shew; if the ideas which govern the entire range and course of life in its cosmic history find expression in every living organism, so that the laws under which the human body exists may be detected in a microscopic animalcule, then we need not wonder that Christ should have chosen the sparrow as an instance of God's providential care.

Indeed, without any scientific insight into the matter, we may be sure that our heavenly Father, "being Lord of all," cannot despise or overlook the humblest of his creatures. Even a large-minded and noble-hearted man is distinguished above others by his freedom from contempt, by his insight



into the meaning of little things, and his sense of the sacredness and the value of common life. His mind is superior to the mere bulk and splendour of outward things. And with God this must be so in the most absolute sense, to the most perfect degree. "He hath respect unto the lowly." And this "respect" extends in due measure to all his creatures.

It is only when we believe that his care is thus universal that we can absolutely rely upon it for ourselves. If there were anything—bird, or beast, or creeping worm, or any single speck of life in the vast population which lives and moves and has its being in a single drop of water, that might escape his notice or be for a moment beyond his ken, we could never be sure of his guardianship for ourselves. The more deeply science penetrates into the mysteries of life, the more minute and impalpable are the forms which they assume. Growth and decay, health and disease, even feeling and thought on their physical side, resolve themselves into a series of molecular changes and an interaction of microscopical germs. The secret of the constitution of matter and of the correlation of forces lies hid in the baffling recesses of the infinitely little, where, let Science push her researches far as she may, God will still have room to hide Himself as effectually as He did from the bewildered groping of men of ancient times.<sup>1</sup> There is nothing hyperbolic, nothing that should surprise us, in Christ's assertion that by Him "the very hairs of our head are all numbered." How can it be otherwise? Before Him all differences of physical magnitude disappear. He sees at once the part in the whole, and the whole in each smallest part; the atom in the world, and the world in the atom; the lowliest of his creatures in the highest, and the highest in its relation to the lowliest and least.

<sup>1</sup> Job xxiii. 8, 9.

But how, it is often asked, can we speak of *care* and *watchfulness*, when

"Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shrieks against our creed" ?

Nature shares indeed with ourselves in the mystery of suffering and death, and, in strange sympathy with her discrowned lord, she "groans and travails in pain"<sup>1</sup> under "the bondage of corruption." But it is an article of our creed that she will have her part in "the liberty of the glory of the sons of God," and that out of her long travail a new birth is coming, which in some fashion that "doth not yet appear," will compensate for all the ages of her painful and laborious "subjection to vanity." For "the creation" surely, as well as for "the sons of God," the Apostle predicts that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." Even as things are, we are apt in certain moods to heighten imaginatively the pangs of the animal creation. We see our misery reflected in their pangs. They suffer, and they die; but they know nothing of "the *sting* of death" which pierces the soul of man and envenoms life for him in so many ways. We need to be on our guard against anthropomorphic conceptions of Nature as well as of God.

What Christ tells us of the care of God for the animals about us should make us more considerate in our treatment of them than many of us are. It may be that the story of "Balaam and the ass," at which in our too confident modern wisdom we are apt to smile, was intended to convey to us a serious warning in this respect; and that when for once "the Lord opened the mouth of the ass," it was not only to "rebuke the madness of the prophet,"<sup>2</sup> but at the same time to utter a plaintive appeal on behalf of all

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 18-23.

<sup>2</sup> See EXPOSITION, *Second Series*, vol. v., p. 126, 127.

the dumb beasts of burden, whose masters are often their pitiless oppressors. And when God sees fit to say by his angel, "Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass *these three times*?" it seems that He observes and remembers every angry unjust blow inflicted on any of his creatures. They are put within our power; are made our servants and companions: and good and faithful servants they have been. Man owes his civilization, under God, to the domestic animals. We are permitted—as indeed it is necessary—to take their life in order to serve our own. But their capacity for suffering is a bond of sympathy between ourselves and them which forbids the infliction of deliberate torture. And surely, when "every work is brought into judgment," Almighty God will have something to say on this account—not only to the brutal carter who furiously lashes his overladen overdriven beast, but also to the gay sportsman who finds the zest of his pleasure in the fierce delight of killing, and turns sport into butchery; and to the cold-blooded vivisectionist, who hunts through all the ingenuities of torment that his imagination can devise or his skill can execute for some possible discovery. It is not by force and cruelty that Nature's secrets are to be won from her. Put thus upon the rack, she will know how to close her lips and to baffle and mock her inquisitors. It is a blot upon our civilization, and upon the progress of knowledge, that the torture-chamber should be reopened in our midst and consecrated afresh to the worship of a self-pleasing and self-magnifying Science. The judgment of God in this matter has, indeed, already been expressed, in the effect which all such cruelty has upon its perpetrators, in the inevitable reaction by which every wanton abuse of man's power over the creatures tends to blunt his moral sensibilities and to make him callous in his dealings with his fellows. We may be sure that for our own sakes, still more than for theirs, He who

has given us this dominion, and made us only less than Himself in this world of ours,<sup>1</sup> is concerned that we should rule in mercy. It is as though Christ said in speaking of God's care over the sparrows: "You hold these creatures cheap and contemptible enough. You destroy them without scruple for your convenience, or for the mere whim and pleasure of doing so. But your heavenly Father feedeth them. Yes: and not one of them, bird or beast, falls to the ground, but He notices, and holds the hand that dealt the blow responsible."

From the value of sparrows, however, we must pass, and rise to an estimate of our own worth in the Divine regard. And a juster sense of the interest which God, as the Maker of all, takes in his lowlier creatures tends in no wise to diminish, but rather to enlarge our conceptions of his care for us, and to make our trust in his providence more practical and more complete. Our God, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," is not a self-contained and unconcerned spectator,—

"Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,  
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall!"

He who has fashioned "every living thing that moveth after its kind," and in its own order in place and time, knows how to adjudge to each its due measure of value and importance. And He has declared that, in his eyes, the material and irrational universe cannot be weighed against the value of the human soul. The earth was made for man: man himself for God. The interest and value of the creatures around us centre in their relation to man, and increase as they approximate to him; even as we may suppose that the interest and value of individual men, in the Divine view, centre in their relation to Christ, and increase in proportion to their nearness to Him. And it

is on account of their connexion with us, in view of the services that they render us and of our treatment of them with its bearing upon our own temper and disposition, that the animal creatures seem to be specially marked and individualized in the Divine regard. "Doth God care for oxen?" Unquestionably He does; and St. Paul by no means wished to deny the intention which the kindly provision of the Mosaic law bears on its very face.<sup>1</sup> And yet, "He saith it altogether for our sake."

When we first awake to a sense of the wonder and the splendour of the universe that is spread around us, we feel ourselves dwarfed and belittled by its greatness. "When I consider thy heavens," exclaims David—or when I look abroad upon the earth with its myriad forms and orders of existence, rising tier above tier, circling world within world in mystic mazy dance, or when I bend beneath the fury of the storm, and watch the play of the lightning in the midnight sky—"what is man," what am I, in view of all this magnificence, amid the sweep of these vast resistless forces which bear me for a moment on the surface of their current! But such thoughts humble only that they may exalt us. If the natural world is so grand a spectacle, what of man the spectator, the interpreter, without whom it would seem to be, for all except its Maker, "but as a picture to a blind man's eye"? If the powers of Nature are so mighty and so terrible, how shall we deem of the mind that has learnt to wrest their secrets from them and yoke them to its service? If the animal creation is so marvellous a fabric, so richly adorned, so endlessly varied in its forms and functions, what then of him whose bodily frame is the crown of the whole edifice, and whose godlike reason makes him the heir of its accumulated treasures?

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10; 1 Tim. v. 18; Dent. xxv. 4. For similar provisions see Exod. xxiii. 19; Lev. xxii. 28; Dent. xxii. 6, 7; and compare Prov. xii. 10 (literally: *A righteous man knoweth the soul of his beast*).

The world is not meant to be a huge burden and mystery, crushing man down into savagery and fetishism, or into the dreariness of Agnostic despair: it is a pedestal on which he is set, a foundation on which his immortal life in Christ is to be built up. It is not a desert in which he is left to roam, hungry and weary, his "soul fainting in him": but, if he will learn to make it so, it is at once a home and a school for his childhood, strongly built and wisely stored for uses both of nurture and of discipline. It is a sanctuary for his worship, with its "storied windows richly dight," through which the light of Heaven, shaded and sifted for his earthly sight, streams in upon him and crowns him with a supernatural halo as God's anointed and ministering priest.

It is "*your heavenly Father*" that "feedeth them"—sparrow and raven, bird and beast. He is their maker: He is "*your Father*," and as *your Father* He "feedeth them." This constitutes the difference, the immeasurable distance, which no theory and no possible discovery as to the genesis of man's body and the mode of its creation can in any way diminish, between the human and the merely animal: "We are also his offspring." The tiniest babe that rocks in his cradle, the lowest savage that prowls in his native forest or lurks in the dens of our great cities, may learn to call God *Father*; and while that is possible, there is an unspeakable worth and dignity latent in his nature. It is man's derivation from God, his Divine sonship and birth-right, recovered in Christ Jesus, which lifts him consciously above "the beasts that perish," which gives him his dower of reason and of will, his nobler passions and spiritual instincts, which "teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven." And if being in this "honour," he "understandeth not," and will not understand, it is no wonder that his life becomes mean and miserable in his own eyes, and that he is

compelled to ask himself the question whether such a life is "worth living."

What, then, are we worth in the eyes of God? "More than many sparrows," says Christ in his homely and wonderful way. *How much more* He came to shew by dying for us. "By the grace of God He tasted death for every man": and if that be true, then the meanest man that ever lived was worth all that is expressed and implied in the "passion" of the Son of God. Nature had given her best in sacrifice, pouring out her "rivers of oil and seas of blood" on countless altars; but "all had flowed in vain." Frenzied with their guilt, men had even slain their own offspring, and had offered "the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul," committing in doing so only a new and more desperate crime. "None could by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him."<sup>1</sup> Nor was it "possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."<sup>2</sup> And yet they did not "cease to be offered." The demand for atonement remained unappeased, incurable, until Christ came, "once in the end of the world, to put away sin by his sacrifice."<sup>3</sup> For nothing short of the sacrifice of the Cross could be brought into comparison with the value of the human soul. Such, at any rate, was the thought and the experience of those who lived under the immediate light of Revelation, and who had had this problem before them for ages, finding at last its solution here. The very sense of justice, under the instinct that taught man his own worth, forbade him with his forfeited and guilty soul to "draw nigh unto God," until "the propitiation" was "set forth." Till then his worship, at the best, was a worship mixed with shame and fear.

But "He loved me, He gave Himself up for me," says St. Paul: God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." And what is *He* worth? He is precious in

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xlix. 7.

<sup>2</sup> b. x. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. ix. 26.

our eyes ; we have no words to set forth his greatness and value. But what is our regard for our Master Christ compared to the complacency and delight with which the Father looked down upon Him when He declared, "This is my beloved Son"? And yet, He "delivered Him up for us all"! We must needs tremble as we think of the intensity and force with which God has "set his love upon" us, if these things be so. If the sufferings of our race sometimes make us ask with Job, "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?"<sup>1</sup> the sufferings of our Redeemer on our behalf increase that wonder a thousandfold. Surely "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." There must be capacities latent within us, a destiny in store for us, vastly greater than we can now conceive, to make it, if we dare to say so, *worth while* that such a sacrifice should be undergone "for us men and for our salvation."

To those who "know the love that God hath toward us," fear and despondency are no longer possible. We "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." "We receive a kingdom that cannot be moved." "We glory in tribulations also." He that for us "spared not his own Son, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" The humblest creatures around us—every bird that sings, every flower that blooms—may serve to rebuke our fears and murmurs. Winds blow and waters roll to bless us. Life and death are both our ministers. "All things are ours," if we "are Christ's," as "Christ is God's."

GEORGE G. FINDLAY.

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<sup>1</sup> Job vii. 17, 18.



## THE GOSPEL TO THE GREEKS.

*John* xii. 20-36.

### INTRODUCTION.

EVEN in the history of our Lord Himself there are few incidents more striking and suggestive than the visit of "certain Greeks" to Him during the last week of his earthly ministry. They came to Him at the moment in which the Jews had finally broken with Him, and He had been constrained to denounce wrath and tribulation and anguish on the very people He came to save. The advent, the adhesion, of these Greeks to the Christ whom Israel had rejected, was an omen of vast significance: it was, as Bengel has said, "the prelude to the transition of the kingdom of God from the Jew to the Gentile."

Striking and portentous as the incident was, it has not received the attention it deserves. It lies in the shadow of the Cross. It is eclipsed by the close neighbourhood of the supreme achievement in the history of Christ,—that laying down, that losing, of his own life, by which He saved the life of the world. On the brink of that divine catastrophe we find it hard to pause and consider the events which immediately preceded it, however momentous and significant they may be. And yet *this* event will well repay the consideration it demands. Manifestly it is marked out, as by the finger of God, for special consideration. As at the Baptism, and again at the Transfiguration, so now, while Jesus shews Himself and speaks to the Greeks who came seeking Him, a voice from Heaven is heard, bearing witness to the beloved Son. And this Voice, like that heard on the Mount and by the River, comes to call attention to a critical and far-reaching event, an event too which has a special claim on *us*, since it is nothing less than the throwing open of the gates of the kingdom of heaven to the Gentile world,

Christ's first and sole proclamation of his gospel to the Greeks.

Probably this was the last event of a day crowded with events. Not improbably even, it was "the conclusion of Christ's public ministry,"<sup>1</sup> and so comes to us charged with new significance. But in any case we shall hardly enter into its meaning, or feel its power, unless we glance at the incidents which led our Lord to sum up his gospel in a few pregnant sayings, which embrace all that is essential and distinctive in his teaching, for the instruction of these inquiring Gentiles.

On the third day, then, of the week in which He tasted death for us all, the Lord Jesus stood in the Court of the Women, his favourite resort in the Temple, as it was also that of any Jew who had a word to say to the people, since in this Court, open to both sexes, most of the public assemblies were held. Most of his disciples were with Him; and through a long and weary day He had been speaking to them, and to the Jews who gathered round them, of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. As the evening fell, He was still teaching and preaching in the Temple; but now Philip, absent from the group for a time, seems to have been hurrying through the Court of the Gentiles—which lay next to but below the Court of the Women—on his way to rejoin his Master and his brethren. This lower court was divided from the higher and more sacred enclosures of the Temple by a stone fence, on the posts of which slabs were affixed—one of these slabs, still in a legible condition, has been recently discovered—bearing the inscription: "No alien must pass within this fence. If any one be caught doing so, he must blame himself for the death that will ensue." Philip was not an alien, but a Jew; and therefore he was at liberty to pass the fence and climb the stairs which led up into the Court of the Women.

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Edersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus*, Vol. ii. p. 389.

But before he reached the steps he was intercepted by certain Greeks—Hellenes, not Hellenists—who were in the habit of coming to Jerusalem in order to worship at the Feast, and who must therefore have been among those foreign converts to the Hebrew faith known as “proselytes of the Gate.” As they could not get to Him, for, being Gentiles, they dare not pass the fence, they begged Philip, if it were possible, to bring Jesus to them.

We are not told who these men were, nor from whence they came. But tradition affirms that more than one effort was made,—notably by the King of Edessa—to induce Jesus to leave the hostile and ungrateful Jews, and to take up his residence in some foreign court, where He was assured of an honourable welcome. And it may be that these Greeks—for Greeks were to be found in every Court—were ambassadors from such prince, and came on some such errand as this. Or it may be that they themselves were persons of wealth and distinction who, seeing that Jesus had finally broken with the Jews, and knowing that the Pharisees were compassing his death, sought to save Him from their hands by offering Him an asylum beyond their reach. Or, again, it may be that they had been so impressed by his words and deeds, that they had resolved to attach themselves to Him, and to share his fate, whatever it might be. Only the day before, He had driven from the Temple the money changers who defiled it with their traffic and chicanery, and rebuked them for degrading into a “den of thieves” the Sanctuary which God intended to be “a house of prayer,” not for the Jews only, but “*for all nations.*” These Greeks may have been impressed by his courage, his purity, his liberality. They may have felt that though Himself a Jew, He was the Friend of all men, *their* Friend. They may have wished to confer with Him, and to learn *how* He proposed to convert the Hebrew Temple into an universal Sanctuary.

Whatever their immediate motive and intention, there can be no doubt that there was far more in their advance to Christ than lies on the surface of this narrative. For, first their words, the words rendered, "we would see Jesus," not only imply a very strong desire to see Him; they also mean, "We have *decided* on seeing Jesus," and seem to imply either that there had been some strife and debate in their own minds before they reached that decision, or that they had discussed the matter with Philip before, and had only just determined what they would do.

Nor, again, was it only a *sight* of Jesus which they wished to obtain, such a long lingering gaze as men love to bend and fix on the great and mighty. They could have had that, probably they had had so much as that, as He went in and out of the Temple and passed through the court in which they worshipped. What they asked for was a formal interview with Him, a conference in which they might open their minds to Him and hear what He had to say in reply. Hence it was, I suppose, that Philip was so deeply impressed by their decision. To him it seemed so important that he did not venture to take it straight to Christ. He first goes and consults Andrew, who was on more intimate terms with Him, as one of the first four among the Twelve. And then, as we are told with a ceremonious formality which denotes the importance of the occasion, Philip having come and told Andrew, Andrew and Philip—the only two of the Apostles who bore Greek names, and therefore fitting ambassadors for Greeks—tell Jesus. Nay, Jesus Himself, ordinarily of so calm and serene a spirit, is much more profoundly impressed and moved than his disciples. To Him, the decision of these Greeks is at once as the stroke of doom and the harbinger of victory. He reads in it a sign that the hour is come in which He must glorify God by dying for men, and be glorified by God by being made the Victor over death, and the

Saviour of the world. He finds in it nothing less than the "crisis of the world"—an omen of the utter defeat of the usurping prince of this world, and a promise that all men shall be drawn to Him, the world's true Prince and Lord.

The whole tone and all the details of this brief narrative, therefore, mark this event as one of the deepest and most extraordinary moment; and we are compelled to find in the request of these Greeks far more than meets the ear.

St. John, to whom we owe our only record of this memorable and significant incident, does not tell us in so many words how the Lord Jesus responded to their request. But we can hardly doubt that He who was full of grace acceded to it; that He came down into the Court of the Gentiles, in which they perforce awaited Him, and spoke with them face to face. Indeed all the critics are agreed that in Verses 23-26 we have the substance of what He said to them. In the parable of the grain of wheat, which is fruitful only in death; in the paradox on losing one's life in order to save it; in the promise that as many as serve and follow Him here shall hereafter be with Him where He is; in the prediction that by his death on the Cross He will draw all men to Himself—in all of which we find one dominant and uniting thought, that of gain by loss, life by death, joy by sorrow—He sums up in a few sentences what was most precious and distinctive in the gospel which He had taught at large among the Jews. And, as if to round the whole circle, as if to give these Greeks a veritable and complete gospel all to themselves, however brief it might be, miracle is added to parable and paradox, promise and prediction, and a great voice from heaven—loud as thunder, but sweet as an angel's song—confirms and ratifies all that He had said to them.

He assumes throughout that they offered themselves to his service, that they wished to enroll themselves among his followers and disciples, that they had come to Him for the

eternal life which He professed to bestow. To his disciples He had often repeated the strange paradox, that they could only find their lives by losing them, only rise into eternal life through death. And now He affirms that this strange law of life is the only law of life, whether in the natural or in the spiritual world. It is the law of his own life as well as of theirs ; and it must be the law of all who would follow Him. That is the true life, He says virtually, which can quicken life. But to give life, we must expend life ; we must give it out or give it up. The corn of wheat must die that it may live and multiply. The Son of Man must die that He Himself may truly live, and that He may give life to the world. And all who follow Him must follow Him in this—they must die to live. But if they submit to this law, they shall have life indeed, the true life, the life that cannot die. *They* are as welcome to Him, and to his eternal life, as though they were children of Abraham ; nay, more welcome, for they are the representatives of the whole race of man, and not of a single family alone.

These two seem to have been the leading thoughts or emotions of Christ as He gave these Greeks the interview they had sought. First, the hearty welcome He could now offer, not to the house of Israel only, but to men of every name and race. And, second, deep and devout exultation that his salvation was to be wide as the world, co-extensive with the whole family of man. The first finds utterance in such phrases as these : “ If any man (Jew or Gentile) serve me, him will my Father honour,” and “ I, if I be lifted up, will draw *all* men unto me ” : while the second reveals itself in the exclamation, “ Now is the *crisis* of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be cast out,” and “ the hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.”

There is a tone of wonder, as well as of joy, in these exclamations, as if the Son of Man Himself were at the greatness of his work, at its scope or

its success ; as if in the advent of these Greeks He beheld the unfolding of a divine purpose of which He had not always been fully conscious, which He had only clearly recognized as He "grew in wisdom and knowledge" by the teaching of labour and experience. And, indeed, we have many indications that that extension of his work and kingdom to the whole Gentile world, in which He here exults, had not always been present to his consciousness, though it had always been embraced in the purpose of God ; that it dawned and grew upon Him as He walked with men, as He met new claims on his grace and felt new impulses of love arise within his heart. "Though he was a Son, he learned . . . by the things which he suffered ;" and, among them, by that conflict between Love and Duty which He shared with us.

Of this growth in wisdom and clearness, this "learning," what the will of God was and how much it embraced until, as here, He saw that it contemplated nothing short of the redemption of the whole world, and could exult in the fact that the Salvation which was "of the Jews," was for the Gentiles also, we have one very familiar and suggestive illustration. Many months before these Greeks decided to see Him, Jesus, wearied by incessant and ill-rewarded toil, had retired from Judea, beyond his beloved Galilee even, to the borderland of Phœnicia, seeking rest, though He found none. For here there came to Him a woman whom St. Mark calls a Greek, *i.e.* a Gentile, a heathen, but who St. Matthew tells us was a Canaanite by birth.<sup>1</sup> Now the Canaanites were not only heathen ; they were the one heathen race on which a curse had rested for ages ; they had been dispossessed of the Promised Land by divine command ; they were disqualified by a rigorous and binding prohibition from ever becoming members of the Holy Congregation. A swarthy mother of this accursed race

<sup>1</sup> Mark vii. 24-30 ; Matthew xv. 21-28.

comes to Christ and begs a boon of Him, beseeching Him to heal her afflicted daughter. By this appeal she brings before Him, in its extreme and most difficult form, the question, whether He is the Saviour of all races or only of one. And there is an apparent rudeness and harshness in his response to her prayer which has already perplexed the Church, so unlike is it to his usual strain. But the reason why He is so unlike Himself is, in all probability, that her appeal has quickened a strife between love and duty in his heart by which for the moment He is bewildered. He was not sent, so at least He felt, save to the House of Israel. How, then, can He take the bread from the children of the House, who sit at the Father's table, even to give it to the household pets<sup>1</sup> who lie and beg under the table? Love prompts Him to respond with bounty to the pitiful appeal; Duty forbids Him so to respond to it.

And this sense of duty, which looks so strange to us—strangest of all in Him—was nevertheless based on a large and wide induction. For nineteen centuries it had been the method of God to confine the special revelations of his mercy to the House of Israel. It had been his method, *i.e.* to provide for the ultimate salvation of the world by saving and blessing one family, one people; by storing up in them an energy by which all the families of the earth should be saved and blessed. From the call of Abraham to the advent of the Messiah, the Hebrew race had been chosen and prepared for this high function. And not without reason. A supernatural revelation could not have been made to every nation and every family without reversing or superseding the natural order: the air would have been darkened with perpetual miracles. In his divine economy,

<sup>1</sup> Our Lord by the use of the diminutive *kunarton* indicates that He is not speaking of the prowling scavenger of the streets, which was held in dislike and contempt by the Jews; but of the trained and familiar companion of the household; and this takes some of the harshness from his tone.



therefore, an economy which characterizes all his works, God selected one nation to be the depositary of the heavenly treasure which was ultimately to enrich the whole family of man. Till this revelation was complete, it was reasonable that it should be confined to a single spot, to a single race. Nor would it be complete till Christ had accomplished his mission, finished his work. Till then, therefore, it was but natural. He should feel that He was sent only to the House of Israel, that He could not step beyond its limits without departing from the Divine method and violating the Will He came to do. These limits might at times irk and gall his tender compassionate spirit. He might at times long to use his power for the benefit of men and women of other than the chosen race. He *must* have longed to help and comfort this poor Canaanitish mother. But dare He do it? Could He do it without overstepping his commission, without doing violence to the method which his Father had patiently followed through long centuries?

It was only the extraordinary and astonishing faith of the woman, it would seem, which suggested to Him that the Will of God must be even larger, kinder, freer, than He had assumed, and so reconciled for Him the warring claims of love and duty. By a wonderful stroke of wit, which could only have sprung from the pressure of love and anguish, she catches Him in his own net, entangles Him in his own words, meeting his rebuke, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs," with the retort, "Yea, Lord; but even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." She admits, *i.e.* his method of interpretation, admits that He is sent to Israel first, or even only; but she cannot and will not think so poorly of God as to believe that the Father of all will grudge any kindness that can be shewn to any creature that He has made. And by her faith in the illimitable mercy and

compassion of God, she extorted the admiration of the Son of Man, and taught Him that duty can never be at war with love, that to shew kindness and do good can never be to violate the will of God. Hence He yields to her request, and cries, "O woman, great is thy faith! be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Women should be proud of the woman who, by her invincible faith in the love that rules the universe, became one of the teachers of the Great Teacher; nor should men, however logical their temper, find any difficulty in believing that He who learned something even from the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, and much more from every child and woman and man He met, learned obedience to a Will even larger than his own from this loving and afflicted mother; for was not her anguish one of "the things which He suffered?"

But, oh, how far had the Man Christ Jesus advanced in his recognition of the loving and redeeming purpose of the will of God, in the months which intervened between his interview with the Syro-Phœnician woman and his conference with these inquiring Greeks in the Temple! There is no trace of agitation, or of hesitation, in his bearing now, no fear lest in admitting *them* to his grace He should be overstepping the bounds of his commission and violating the will of the Father who sent Him. So far from being bewildered between the rival claims of love and duty, He does not even pause to note that these claims can never be opposed. So far from asking whether He had been sent to find and save any but the lost sheep of the House of Israel, He is sure that the true temple must be a house of prayer for all nations. So far from doubting whether He has gifts for the Gentiles also, He sees in the coming of the Greeks a sign that his work is accomplished, his victory won, and exults over the proof they bring Him that the hour has struck in which He is to be glorified. He opens his arms,

and his heart, to the whole world, and rejoices that all men are to be drawn to Him, that all are comprehended in the saving power and love of God.

The fundamental and dominant thought of the Gospel which Christ Himself delivered to the Greeks is this—that death is the inevitable condition of life: and this thought pervades his whole discourse and finds expression in paradox, in parable, in promise, in prediction. The Son of Man must die, He says, both that men may live, and that He Himself may be lifted up into a higher life. His disciples must follow Him in the way of the Cross, *i.e.* they must die with Him, if they would rise with Him into life eternal. Nay, every man, if he would not lose his life must hate his life; *i.e.* he must hold mere living in generous scorn if he would reach the true ends of life. And this law, which pervades the whole round and structure of human life, runs also throughout the physical universe, in which even a grain of wheat cannot breed and multiply unless it fall into the earth and die. Everywhere, death is the condition of life, or of more life and fuller. Everywhere, the lower forms of life fulfil their end and aim in being lost that, from them, higher and more fruitful forms of life may spring.

This was the dominant theme, as of his Gospel to the Jews, so also of his Gospel to the Greeks. And we must now mark how it was varied and wrought out.

#### I. THE PARABLE.

*“ Verily, verily (literally, Amen, amen), I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.”*

The Parable is introduced with that solemn “Verily, verily” which St. John has made familiar to us on the lips of our Lord. On his lips this formula is used to call attention to truths of exceptional moment and depth, truths

which command the "amen," or assent, of his whole nature, truths often which did not lie on the surface, but beneath the surface, of the words He was about to utter; truths which might be very repugnant to the minds, habits, inclinations of those who listened to them, and which needed therefore to be the more earnestly pressed on their attention.

Nor is it at all difficult to see why He laid special and weighty emphasis on the fact—that death, self-surrender, self-renunciation, self-sacrifice, is the condition of all life, or why He called the special and earnest attention of *the Greeks* to it. For not only is the truth itself a fundamental truth of his Gospel and kingdom, lying at the very root both of Christian theology and Christian experience, and finding its supreme expression in the Cross; not only is it repugnant to man's general bent and inclination—for who cares to impose on himself either a yoke or a cross? but it also ran right in the teeth of Greek thought and civilisation. Self-culture and self-enjoyment were the master words with the Greek—the chief good of human life, the supreme aim, the ruling bent of the whole Grecian world, as we may learn from their literature, their art, their political economy, their social and civic institutions; from which we may also learn how miserably, in pursuing this aim, they fell short of the ends for which man was created and made. So that in calling them to substitute self-renunciation for self-culture, and self-sacrifice for self-gratification, the Lord Jesus was virtually asking them to reverse the whole bent of their thought and conduct, and to set before themselves an ideal the very opposite to that which they had hitherto pursued. No wonder, then, that He opened his discourse with this solemn "Verily, verily," forewarning them by his very tone and manner how heavy was the task, how arduous the achievement, how radical the change, to which He summoned them. Not that He

disapproved either of culture or enjoyment; all He demanded was—as we shall see—that the culture should tend to maintain and develop the spiritual life in man, and that the enjoyment should be cheerfully sacrificed, if need were, to the higher claims of duty.

Even this, however, was a grave demand to make on men who had been bred to love culture for its own sake, and enjoyment for its own sake, and to place them above the pursuit of truth, righteousness, and charity. To call on them to use their culture for the welfare of “the common herd,” and to give up any enjoyment which could be secured only at the cost of their own higher life or by injuring their neighbour; to bid them live for others, in short, instead of for themselves, was to make so heavy a demand on them that our Lord felt bound to shew them the reasonableness of such a demand, to place it on the widest and surest foundation. This foundation He finds in a law of nature. He appeals to their own observation and experience. For every man knows that a grain of wheat abides alone, contributes nothing to the general wealth or welfare, until it is cast into the earth, and is dissolved under the pressure of the physical and chemical forces of the sun-warmed earth; or, as we may perhaps add, until it is crushed into flour and worked up into bread. In either case dissolution, the death of the living grain, is the condition of its usefulness, its fruitfulness, *i.e.* its higher life. For nothing exists for itself; nothing truly lives or fulfils its true function save as part of the great whole, and in so far as it ministers to the welfare and advance of the whole. This is the law of universal being, of universal well-being. And though our Lord here gives only a single illustration of the law, his single illustration suffices to remind us that it is a general law, that it runs and holds throughout the physical universe. All things minister to and help each other—even sun, moon, and stars. All things give out life,

or give up life and power, to quicken and cherish life in other forms ; earth, water and heat ministering to the life of the plant, the plant dying that it may minister to the life of bird and beast, bird and beast dying that they may minister to the life of man.

The grain of wheat is but a single type, a single illustration of an universal law. Its death is the condition of its life, since death releases the vital power imprisoned in the husk, and sets it free to manifest itself in higher and more complex forms. For the grain of wheat when cast into the earth does not absolutely die. The principle of life held captive in it, so far from being extinguished by dissolution, is liberated ; it develops new energy and unfolds itself in fairer and more fruitful forms. Death, such death as it undergoes, is not death to it, but the condition of freer, more energetic and useful life. Left to mould or rot in the granary, it absolutely perishes, subserving no useful purpose but rather becoming a source of infection and decay, a savour of death unto death ; while, cast into the fruitful earth, it becomes fruitful, ministers to the life of man, rises into and takes its part in the general harmony of service which pervades the universe.

Death, then, is the condition of life in the natural world. And the law of the natural world is also the law of the human world, as our Lord proceeds to shew in the Paradox which follows his parable ; thus confirming that appeal to the analogy between the course and constitution of Nature and the truths of revealed Religion on which some of our ablest thinkers and divines have insisted, and warranting us in going to the world outside us for a key to the mysteries of the world within.

S. Cox.

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*THE VINDICTIVE PSALMS.*

THE difficulties which beset the vindictive or imprecatory Psalms have arisen from the erroneous views of Inspiration which held sway for so many centuries, and which even to-day have not wholly disappeared. The mechanical theory of Inspiration was thought to be the true one by Romanist and Protestant alike. The writer was the conduit, through which the stream of inspiration passed; the prophet was the mouth-piece, by which the Holy Ghost gave utterance. This mechanical theory of inspiration was displaced by the dynamical, as it was called. But the dynamical theory did not correct in any great degree the erroneous views of Inspiration to which men still clung. If every letter and every word was not actually suggested; if the prophet was considered to speak in his own language, and according to his own character; if the imagination and idiosyncrasy of the writer was allowed to have its play; still thought and fancy and diction and character and imagination were so overruled that every utterance of Scripture remained the distinct utterance of the Holy Ghost, free from all error of fact and sentiment. The nature of the writing went for nothing; the time of the utterance was not to be considered; the circumstances under which the words were spoken did not qualify the message. Although the Book of Job was a sustained argument between the Patriarch and his three friends, in which his friends were shewn to be in error, men did not hesitate to quote the words of Eliphaz and his companions as true statements of moral truth, and cited them without a suspicion of misgiving for the purpose of proving points of doctrine. The same weight attached to the speech of untaught and barbarous judges in Israel's dark ages as to the words of Christ Himself; a song of triumph over fallen enemies was Holy Scripture, and, therefore, of the same value as the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Such views of Scripture are even now being only slowly discarded; men are only beginning to understand, that, as the training of the Jewish nation was slow and progressive, so in Holy Scripture itself there must be evidence of the same slow progress, the words of Holy Scripture being ethically and morally more true, and approaching more nearly to a perfect standard, as deeper knowledge and greater light were given.

The key, then, to the solution of the difficulty of the vindictive Psalms lies in this ill-remembered fact: that the Psalmist—whether a hero of the Judges' time, or King David's royal self, or some prophet of the Captivity—could not transport himself out of his own time, or rise to any great extent beyond his own surrounding circumstances; and further, that, under ordinary conditions, no miracle of inspiration was performed, by which the Holy Ghost gave the seer light and knowledge beyond the experience of his own age or the ideas of his own contemporaries. Of course, since all things are possible with God, He could have illuminated the prophet's mind with light equal to that which shone upon the world when the Eternal Son Himself caused the full blaze of His own perfect morality to be manifested to his astonished hearers. There are, in fact, many instances of inspiration, when the seer was transported altogether beyond himself, and gave utterance to sentiments which were outside the scope of his own conscious experience, and to ideas which his own mind could never have engendered. Some of the Messianic prophecies are instances of such exalted inspiration. But this divine rapture was rare. The evidence of the writings shews clearly that men did indeed truly speak and write as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; but, as in the case of St. Luke, they had to make use of their own faculties, and wrote and spake in accordance, personally, with their own ideas, and, nationally, with the ideas of



their race. The words of the Psalms are true, *i.e.* they truly represent the thought of the Psalmist; but they are not, in all cases, true ethically, *i.e.* they do not present to us moral truth in the same way, or according to the same high standard, as we find it, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount.

I purpose to apply these principles of interpretation to three Psalms, chosen from three different epochs in the national history: one written in the time of the Judges; one taken from the Psalms of David; one selected from the group to which the troubles of the Captivity gave birth. They are the Song or Psalm of Deborah, Psalm cix. and Psalm cxxxvii. If they remove the difficulty from these three Psalms, it is evident, that the same principles, applied to other Psalms of the same character, will be equally efficacious in disposing of the difficulties which beset them.

1. THE PSALM OF DEBORAH. The difficulty here is this: Deborah, being a prophetess, that is a woman under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, declares, in a spirit of triumphant vindictiveness, that Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, was blessed above women; Jael having just committed a treacherous murder under circumstances from which no revolting or atrocious element was lacking.

Let us enquire what the religious training of Deborah had been. She was more or less acquainted with the Mosaic law, and had certainly been brought up and educated under its influence. The law of Moses was the law of God. If any prophet spoke authoritatively, as the inspired messenger of God, that prophet was Moses. But was the law of Moses perfect in an ethical sense? Did it teach that morality in which Christians are trained? Did it correspond with the far-reaching morality which Christ taught? Let our Lord Himself give the answer: "Ye have heard that it hath been said"—that is in the law given by Moses—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine

enemy ; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you." While Christ taught love and forbearance to all, the Jewish code taught men to love their friends, but to hate their enemies. There is no such actual precept in the Book of Deuteronomy ; but, as the words are the words of Christ, no one will care to dispute that they accurately represent the spirit of the law of Moses. The law was God's law ; it was not a perfect law ; but it was the best possible law under the circumstances. It was not perfect absolutely ; but it was perfectly adapted to the people to whom it was given. A Jew of those days—savage, barbarous, uncultivated—could not have received the perfect law of Christ. "Because of the hardness of" their "hearts, Moses gave" them such "precepts" as were suited to their condition. Before he could receive the perfect law of Christ, the Jew needed to be trained up to it by the long teaching of centuries. It was in the Mosaic law, ethically imperfect, that Deborah had been trained. When she spoke, she spoke according to the light she had received ; according to the light that God Himself had given her. The fact that she was a prophetess did not place her on a higher pedestal than the great Lawgiver of her people. Her words breathed his spirit, with something of natural savagery added thereto. Her thoughts were in accordance with her law—God's law. She hated her enemies ; she gloried in their discomfiture ; she triumphed in their death. Treachery in her eyes, and, let me add, in the eyes of all her nation at the time, went for nothing. It was but a stratagem of war ; it was but taking advantage of a lucky chance that offered itself. Among the Jews, as among every savage tribe of which we know anything, enemies were considered outside the pale of humanity. All was right and just and fair as far as enemies were concerned ; and no words of praise could be exaggerated which glorified the agent by whom the ven-

geance was accomplished. In spite of Christian teaching, in spite of Christian training for some two thousand years, something of this unholy savagery clings to ourselves. We need not go far for an example. The famous telegram of the Emperor William after Sedan is a case in point; nay the very "Te Deum," by which we praise the "God of battles" for giving us victory and triumph over our foes, is but a remnant of the same spirit. Who could, in the eyes of Israel, be more blessed than the woman by whom God had given deliverance? The words are revolting to us who have been taught by Christ; they would not have been revolting, but the reverse, had we been Jews suffering under the cruel oppression of Sisera. The words of Deborah were true and proper from her point of view, although they are untrue, and improper in the highest degree, to us. And, be it remembered, they were not only true and proper to Deborah; they were true and proper in the light of that partial law under which God was training the Israelites for better things. To the man, whose *duty* it was to hate the enemy with whom no terms were to be kept, the words of blessing presented nothing incongruous. The words were inspired; but it was not within the purpose of God that the inspiration should overrun the current ideas of the day, any more than He willed that the inspiration of the Law of Moses should cause the precepts he gave to be ethically perfect.

2. PSALM cix. I have not thought it necessary to allude to the various interpretations and explanations to which recourse has been had in the case of the Psalm of Deborah. One familiar use of the Song will suffice. It was at one time a favourite argument with some Protestants, that not much importance was to be attached to the promised blessedness of the Virgin Mary, because, at best, it was an exaltation which she shared with the murderess of Sisera. And it never entered the minds of these controversialists,

that there could be a difference in the utterance of the savage judge living in a dark age, and that of the pure maiden of Nazareth. But it may be well to revert for a moment to the explanations which have been offered of the Psalm now before us.

It has been suggested that the words of imprecation are not those of David—the inspired prophet—but they are a quotation; that, in fact, they are the words of the curse with which Shimei cursed David at Bahurim. That were, indeed, a solution of the difficulty. But the suggestion is so evidently born of the difficulty that it scarcely needs refutation. Shimei is supposed to commence speaking at Verse 6; but there is no trace of any change of person. The words of the curse apply to a private individual, or to a person holding subordinate office; they are not words which an oppressed or injured subject would have applied to a king. The actual curse of Shimei, as given in the Book of Samuel, is altogether different. And the twentieth verse of the Psalm is conclusive. “Let this”—the preceding curse—“be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord,” are the words of David. It is altogether too far-fetched to insert some unspoken thought such as “This is the curse wherewith they have cursed me, oh Lord, but let this curse, instead of falling upon me, be the reward of mine adversaries.” It is lost time to waste words over such a theory; and the more because, even were the impossible supposition conceded, that this curse was the curse of Shimei, the difficulty is removed only from this Psalm to meet us again in other Psalms of the same vindictive character.

Another solution of the difficulty has been attempted. We are told that David, in cursing his enemy, does not refer to his own personal foe, but generally to the wicked, who are the enemies of God; and we are assured, despite any apparent seeming to the contrary, that he had not in his mind any individual hatred, any personal vindictiveness,

any special or peculiar animosity. The man, to whom none is to extend mercy, is not an individual, but a type of those whose very memory is to be cut off, because they are wicked and deceitful. He is not a person, but a class; and David, in uttering his curses, is but denouncing the just judgment of God against all those who offend against his laws. But the most cursory reading of the Psalm disproves such an unfounded and unsupported assertion as this. The theory would never have been dreamed of but as a happy escape from a difficulty which, on the older theory of inspiration, was felt to be insuperable. The personal and individual element is to be traced in every verse. The man, in his own proper and most distinct personality, stands before us; and, as if to give intensity to this personality, the wife and the children are introduced. There is no trace of a lay figure standing as the representative of a class; but there is a living man before us—a husband, and a father. The very inventors of the theory feel the ground giving beneath their feet; and so a new theory is started. The Psalm is a prophecy of Judas. Now there can be no question that the Psalm is applicable to Judas. It is quoted in this connection by the Apostle. I understand it as quoted *accommodative*. St. Matthew, as we know, was constantly in the habit of quoting the Old Testament in this manner. If anybody desire to take it in this sense, the Psalm may be taken as a direct prophecy of the traitor who betrayed Christ. But this will not prevent it from having a present and personal meaning to David. It was not spoken by David as a *conscious* prophecy of the traitor who was to betray David's Son and Lord a thousand years hence, even though this reference may have been in the mind of the Holy Ghost through whose inspiration he spake. It arose out of his own condition, and was suggested by the circumstances in which he found himself. The Psalm may have had reference to Doeg the Edomite,

or, like Psalm lv., it may have had for its primary meaning a reference to the revolt of Absalom; and the wicked man alluded to—as in Psalm lv.—may be the king's old councillor Ahithophel. How keenly David felt his defection may be seen by the prayer that his counsel might be turned into foolishness, and by his sending Hushai to circumvent him. It is, however, of small importance what the historical reference is, if the Psalm have any primary reference. It matters not whether Doeg or Ahithophel is cursed, if the words of imprecation apply to any person whatever.

Because it was felt that none of these interpretations really met the difficulty, another theory was started; a theory the better worth considering as it has found large favour and acceptance in the present day.

David, it is alleged, hated and cursed his enemies—his own personal enemies; but he hated them because, being evil, they were the enemies of good. The Jew, we are reminded, was brought up in a hard and pitiless school. He was not trained in a manner which gave much play to the kinder feelings of humanity, or fostered the softer emotions of his nature. A burning zeal for God's honour was the ruling principle of the man who claimed to be religious. On account of God's honour the denunciatory word was never far from his lips; for the sake of the glory of Jehovah the murderous stone was ever ready to his hand. And, besides, as a future state of retribution was unknown, so it is said,<sup>1</sup> men looked to see God's justice vindicated by the swift vengeance which, in this present life, should overtake and overwhelm the evil. This differs from the former theory that the Psalmist cursed the wicked as a class hateful to God, because it admits the personal

<sup>1</sup> This is true generally. Cf. for instance, Hezekiah's Psalm, Isa. xxxvii. especially vv. 11, 18, 19; but it is not universally true. In some instances, and certainly in the case of David, the Old Testament inspiration did embrace a future life. Cf. 2 Sam. xii. 23 and Ps. xvii. 15.

element—which it was felt could not be excluded—and yet saves the author of the Psalm from the charge of personal vindictiveness. He hated his enemies; but he hated them because they were the enemies of God. “Do not I hate them, oh God, that hate thee, and am not I grieved with them that rise up against thee? yea, I hate them right sore as though they were mine enemies.” The theory is so far good as, if true, it is to some extent a vindication of David. He hated his enemies because they were God’s enemies. To the apologist for David such a plea is, perhaps, worth putting upon the record. A similar plea is not unknown in Christian times. It was the excuse urged on behalf of the Roman inquisitors; it was the defence for the Spanish Philip, and for the English Mary; it was urged for Calvin burning Servetus; it had its echo among the hills of the Scottish Covenanters. But we are not (at present) concerned with the personal character of David, but with the ethical morality of the Psalms. And, from this point of view, the theory helps us not at all. All are now agreed that such a spirit—whether it meets us in the Old Testament or in the annals of the Christian Church—is not the spirit of Christ. And thus, even if the theory be a true one, which we are unwilling to admit, we are driven back upon the old difficulty, that the vindictive Psalms are not in accordance with the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

Is it not better to face the difficulty honestly? To admit, what every unsophisticated reader of this Psalm must gather from its contents, that David was animated by a spirit of personal hatred, and cursed his personal enemies? Let us remember that in doing so no Jew could conceive he was acting wrongly. He was acting in the spirit of the law he had been trained to reverence as supreme, and which taught him in no indistinct or uncertain language that it was his duty to hate his enemy.

Psalm cix. grates against our feelings more, perhaps,

than any other, because of the contrast offered in the twenty-first verse. The whole vocabulary of cursing and imprecation had been exhausted. Not content with invoking vengeance against the man himself,—the guileless wife and the innocent children are involved in the bitter hatred. Even after the husband and the father had paid the forfeit of his treachery, no thought of mercy intervenes for those whom he had left bereaved and desolate. Like the Ammonite or the Moabite, he was to be cursed for all generations. And then—while the echo of the frightful curse was still resounding on the air—the inspired Psalmist does not fear to turn to God with the prayer that the mercy he had so ruthlessly denied to others might be given to himself: “But deal thou with *me*, oh God, according to thy lovingkindness, for sweet is thy mercy.”

Yet notice: notwithstanding the bitter imprecations it contained; notwithstanding the words of cursing, which, according to all Christian ideas, defiled its page; notwithstanding the virulent hatred and utter want of charity which it displayed, editor after editor of the Holy Scriptures—themselves inspired men—did not hesitate to receive this Psalm as an inspired writing, and to place it among the Hagiographa.

Can the apparent anomaly be explained?

Undoubtedly. “It was said to them of old time, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy.” Who was a greater enemy to David than the treacherous counsellor, who had once been his friend? and who, because he had been his friend, because—to quote from another vindictive Psalm—they had taken sweet counsel together and had walked in the house of God as friends, could stab with the greater certainty of inflicting a deadly wound. Nor need we wonder that wife and children, to the latest posterity, were involved in the curse. The law of Moses sanctioned this bitterness of spirit. “An Ammonite, or



Moabite, shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation," *i.e.* for ever. And the hatred was not to be passive, or negative; but distinctly active. They were to do them all the harm they could. "Thou shalt not seek their peace, nor their prosperity, all thy days for ever." No curse nor malediction could go beyond such a precept as this; and this we must remember was the actual command of God Himself. And what is the reason assigned? It was not because these Ammonites and Moabites were wicked and transgressors beyond all other races; or because, as in the case of the Canaanites, they might seduce the Israelites to evil, that they were to be held accursed and hated; the eternal hatred is based on a single act of hostility. The Jew was to hate the Ammonite and the Moabite, and was to refrain from seeking their good for ever, because "they met them not with bread and water in the way when they came out of Egypt." Had David used language other than he did, he would have been a Christian, not a Jew. He would have forestalled by centuries that word which Christ was the first to reveal: "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

Under the influence of the Holy Spirit's inspiration David might have done all this. He might have forestalled the sentiments and the very words of Christ. The Holy Ghost is tied to no time, and is dependent upon no circumstances. But, if we turn to the Sermon on the Mount, it is clearly revealed to us by Christ that such was not the method that it pleased God to adopt. In giving to his prophets the aid of his Holy Spirit, God did not give them, necessarily, such a revelation as should open to their minds the morality, which, only in after ages, Christianity was to introduce. It was his purpose and design that there should be a slow progressive development by which the

human mind was to be trained for the more perfect revelation of the future.

3. PSALM cxxxvii. To this Psalm we need refer but briefly. Like most of the Songs of the Captivity, it unites in itself two contradictory elements. There is the pathos of the Exiles' lament: "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Sion; as for our harps, we hanged them up upon the trees that are therein." But, suddenly and abruptly, the strain of pathos breaks into a stern and bitter cry for vengeance: "Remember the children of Edom, O Lord, in the day of Jerusalem; how they said, Down with it, down with it, even to the ground." And from the accomplice the Psalmist turns to the principal: "O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery (who shall be wasted with misery), yea, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us; yea, blessed shall he be that taketh thy children and throweth them against the stones." The words read like an echo of the savage song in which Deborah invoked a blessing on Sisera's murderess. And they are noteworthy as shewing that much the same spirit as animated Deborah was still existent among the Israelites. "Thou shalt hate thine enemy." They had not forgotten the precept which was so thoroughly in accord with human nature. The old spirit of hate survived. It survived; but a better spirit was at work, silently making its way into the hearts of those who should receive it. Already, in the earlier chapters of Isaiah, the note of peace and amity had been sounded: "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isa. xix. 24, 25). The writer of the second part of Isaiah was contemporaneous with the author of Psalm cxxxvii., and in his pages we find hardly a note of hate or vengeance.

In this respect, as in so many others, the evangelical prophet has caught the spirit of the Saviour who was to be revealed, and, in the contemplation of the calm and serene glories of the future, he loses that bitter spirit, which still was to remain for long years and centuries the unhappy heritage of his people. Nor is this better spirit confined to him. It breathes in many of the teachers of Israel in the years of the Exile and in the centuries which succeeded it; notably in the sage who made one of the latest contributions to the national collection of Proverbs, and forbids retaliation in the striking apothegm (Prov. xxiv. 29): "Say *not*, as he hath done to me, so do I to him; I render unto the man according to his work."<sup>1</sup>

One might almost imagine that the principle laid down, and which has been applied to these three Psalms, must be clear and self-evident; yet it is simply because they have failed to comprehend or feared to apply it that many of the faithful have been troubled with apprehensions and misgivings which have made it doubly hard for them to meet the sneers of those who hate and despise religion. The Sermon on the Mount is sufficient evidence that the morality of the Law was imperfect; and therefore proves that the inspiration vouchsafed to the prophets was imperfect. No one will venture to claim a higher degree of inspiration for any Old Testament prophet than that vouchsafed to Moses. If Moses, giving a law to an untrained and ignorant people, commanded as a precept, that they should hate their enemies, there can be no surprise that similar sentiments should be found in the Singers and Psalmists of Israel. Somehow or other, while nearly all men have recognized that in the Psalter there are poems, some of which breathe a vindictive spirit altogether out of harmony with the teaching of Christ, it has not been recognized, to anything like the same extent, that a similar vindictive spirit is to be traced in the Book of Deuteronomy, and in the

<sup>1</sup> See THE EXPOSITOR (*New Series*) Vol. vi. pp. 403-4.

ordinances of Moses. And so, while the difficulty in the Psalms was patent to all—explained on baseless hypotheses by the friends of Christianity, and turned into equally baseless allegations by its enemies—the key, which would have solved the difficulty, was lost to sight, and lost very mainly because men were blinded by a false idea of inspiration. Inspiration did not interfere with the natural play of man's normal feelings; and, quite apart from any spirit of vindictiveness traceable in Holy Scripture, a yielding to the passing emotion of the moment, somewhat similar in its character, may be found here and there in most of the sacred books. Job, in his anguish, curses the day on which he saw the light; and the parallel passage in Jeremiah is familiar to all. Something of the same kind may be traced in the writings of the New Testament, as it is to be perceived in the actions and sayings of the Apostles. All will call to mind the impetuous passage in the Epistle to the Romans where St. Paul says, that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for the sake of his fellow-countrymen, the Jews; and that other one, in which he declares himself to be the chief of sinners;—neither absolutely true, but the thought of the one momentarily possible in a man of St. Paul's vehement and passionate nature, and the other too closely allied to all Christian experience to occasion much wonder or surprise.

Nor must it be supposed for a moment, that the principle which has been enunciated detracts from Inspiration; although it may run counter to the received idea of it. Men truly spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; but in what the inspiration consisted, or what it effected, is nowhere laid down in Holy Scripture, nor is it defined in the Articles of the English Church. It may be that the old-fashioned idea of Inspiration—like so many old-fashioned ideas—needs to be re-examined in order to be placed on a truer and sounder basis.

H. N. BERNARD.

## ST. PAUL ON PREDESTINATION.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 12, 13.

BOTH Calvinists and Arminians—that is to say, those who maintain the doctrine of election and predestination in the most rigid sense, and those who maintain some independent efficiency in the will of man—have claimed the passage above referred to, each for their own view ; and it has been said, sarcastically but truly, that the opposite treatment of the passage by those two schools consists simply in this, that the Arminian reads it, “ *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.*” While the Calvinist reads it, “ *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.*”

Now it is doing injustice to this most beautiful and suggestive passage to bring it into controversy at all. There is a real difficulty in the metaphysics of the question concerning the relation between the will of God and the will of man ; opinions are, and will continue to be, divided upon it, and it may conceivably be to some extent elucidated by careful thought, and by the examination of the inspired writings. But the passage now before us, though by its mode of expression it suggests the difficulty, has absolutely no bearing on its solution. Its purpose is not doctrinal, or rather not theoretical, at all, but practical. It follows one of the strongest assertions to be found in Holy Scripture of Christ’s former humiliation and present glory ; and it is followed by an exhortation to purity in the midst of an evil world. The difficult and mysterious question of the relation between the will of God and the will of man was not before the Apostle’s mind when he wrote it ; and the paradox and apparent contradiction—speaking in the first clause as if man’s will were everything,

and in the second as if God's will were everything—is due to St. Paul's habit of writing in a condensed and elliptical style, leaving the reader to seize for himself the connexion between the thoughts. We do not really add anything to St. Paul's thought—we only bring out what was present though unseen, as by "development" in the photographic process—if we supply the connecting link as follows; I quote the words of the Revised Version exactly, and supply the words in italics: "Work out your own salvation; for, *though it must be with fear and trembling because of the weakness of your mortal nature, yet ye know that ye work not alone, but it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.*"

But how is it possible for the will of God to work through the will of man without superseding and annulling it? This is a mystery which man's understanding is not altogether competent to solve; but its solution is in no way necessary to faith in God; just as the somewhat similar, though lower, mysteries of the relation between the vital and the chemical forces in the processes of nutrition and organization, and between the mental forces and the unconscious functions of the nervous system—in briefer words, between matter and life, and between unconscious life and mind—must be recognized as insoluble, without, therefore, giving up all research into the laws of life and of mind. From another passage, though not from that now before us, it appears that St. Paul was aware of the existence of an insoluble mystery in the relation of the human to the Divine will, but it does not appear to have been in any degree a cause of perplexity to him.

In Romans viii. 29, the Revisers have improved the style of the passage by substituting "foreordain" for "predestinate"; "to ordain" being a common word in Biblical English, while "to destine" and "destiny" do not occur there. I shall follow their example by substituting "fore-

ordain " and "foreordination " for "predestinate " and "predestination."

Controversialists on both sides will probably agree that the question between Calvinist and Arminian may be thus formulized : "Does God's foreordination depend on his foreknowledge, or his foreknowledge on his foreordination?" The Arminian places the foreknowledge first; the Calvinist places the foreordination first. What does St. Paul say on this subject?

But let us first ask the "previous question : " Was this question ever present to St. Paul's mind at all? I think we can shew that it was not.

Every one who has mastered the rudiments of the criticism of the New Testament is aware that the thirteen Epistles of St. Paul consist of four well marked groups, distinguished not so much by the subjects treated as by the time of the Apostle's life to which they belong. They are as follows :—(1) First and Second Thessalonians. (2) First and Second Corinthians, Galatians and Romans. (3) The Epistles of the first imprisonment, namely, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. (4) The Pastoral Epistles, namely, the two to Timothy and one to Titus.

It is no disparagement to the Apostle's inspiration to say that from the first to the second group, and from the second to the third—though not, I think, further—we can trace a change and progress in his views of Divine truth ; a change not consisting in contradiction, but in development and completion. The Epistle to the Philippians thus contains his most matured views ; and in that Epistle he has, as we see in the passage quoted at the beginning of this essay—a passage written for exhortation and "edification " exclusively—stated in the most unqualified way the two mutually supplementary truths of the freedom of man's will and the supremacy of God's will, not only without attempting to solve the "antinomy " or apparent meta-

physical contradiction, but without shewing the slightest consciousness that there is any difficulty to be solved.

A consciousness of the difficulty is, however, shewn in a passage belonging to the previous group of Epistles, namely Romans ix. 14, *et seq.* It might be said, and perhaps has been said, that in the interval of some years between the writing of the Epistle to the Romans and that to the Philippians, the Apostle had become comparatively indifferent to questions of what is contemptuously called "mere controversial theology." But this is scarcely consistent with the fact that the passage from Philippians under consideration comes immediately after an eminently theological passage, containing one of the strongest declarations to be found anywhere of the pre-existence of Christ, and of his present power and glory. Yet we must infer from the construction of the sentence, that St. Paul, at the time when he wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, regarded the question of the relation of the will of man to the will of God as one which ought to cause no perplexity, and needs no solution.

The question in St. Paul's time was not felt as a practical one. Jews who were rejoicing that the promised Saviour had come, and Gentiles who knew that they had been saved by the Gospel of Christ from "abominable idolatries," were not likely to worry themselves and shew mistrust of their Saviour by asking, "How can I be certain of my own individual foreordination and election to eternal life?" But if this question, which has perplexed so many minds ever since the period of the Reformation, had been asked in St. Paul's time, we can see plainly enough from his writings how he would have answered it. Nine out of his thirteen Epistles are addressed, not to individuals but to congregations, and he always addresses the congregations as consisting of men whom God has called and chosen. Had such a question been addressed to him, we consequently cannot



doubt that his reply would have been something to this effect: "The fact of your Christian profession, and of your seeking salvation, is proof enough that you are of God's elect. God is your Father, and 'as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him' (Psalm ciii. 13). You are already in possession of all Christian privileges, and we have a right to be confident that 'He who has begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ' (Philippians i. 6). But these privileges may be lost by neglecting or abusing them; 'wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall'" (1 Cor. x. 12).

It is in this, and not in any absolute, sense that St. Paul habitually speaks of election. Probably the most signal passage of the kind is 1 Thessalonians i. 4, 5: "Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election; how that our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." Although St. Paul had heard the voice of Christ after his ascension, and had been caught up into the third heaven, he did not pretend to know more than the newest of his converts about the secret decrees of God; it was not a matter of revelation to him that the Christians of Thessalonica were of God's elect; and it is not possible that during his sojourn in Thessalonica he could have acquired such an intimate acquaintance with every individual member of the congregation as to be able to say that he felt a moral certainty of the final perseverance unto salvation of them all.

In one well-known passage, however, St. Paul departs from this his customary use of words, and speaks of calling, not only to Christian privileges, but to eternal glory. I mean Romans viii. 28, 30: "To them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that

he might be the firstborn among many brethren; and whom he foreordained, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." It is in no way strange, but quite consistent with all the analogies of language, that the Apostle should in this one passage speak of "God's calling" in a somewhat higher sense than the usual one. "Election" is not mentioned here, but this is a mere accident, not at all surprising when we remember that the technical language of the subject had not yet been formed. But we do injustice to this magnificent passage if we understand it as a revelation of the secret purposes of God. It goes on: "What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who is against us?" And from the 28th verse to the end of the Chapter, the entire passage is a hymn of confidence, triumph, and praise, such as would be impossible if, in the Apostle's belief, there were any reasonable ground for the fear that those who are really serving God and following Christ may not after all, in God's secret purpose, be elected to eternal life.

It is further to be remarked that St. Paul's language concerning the relation of the will of man to the will of God is uncertain, and what might be called wavering by those who demand a certain utterance on all controverted questions. In the passage from Philippians with which we began, we have seen that he forgets, or refuses to see, that there is any such question at all. In that from Romans which we have just been examining, he says: "Whom God foreknew, he also foreordained," from which expression, taken alone and interpreted by logical rules, we should infer that St. Paul regarded foreordination as depending on foreknowledge. But in another Epistle belonging to the same group, he says: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. xv. 10); and in the same Epistle, "Who maketh to differ? and what hast thou that

thou didst not receive?" It would be possible to answer this without logical absurdity, "I made myself to differ; and wherein I have made myself to differ, I have that which I did not receive." But St. Paul does not contemplate this as a possible answer; for he immediately goes on to say, "But if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.) From a comparison of these passages, then, we arrive at the same conclusion as that forced on us by the passage in Philippians, namely, that St. Paul did not regard this question as one on which it is necessary to have any decided and formulated opinion.

I shall now endeavour to shew that the same conclusion is warranted by the passage, Romans ix. 6, *et seq.*, which has so often been quoted in proof of the most rigid predestinarianism. It is the only passage in which St. Paul shews any consciousness of moral or metaphysical difficulty arising out of the question of God's foreordination.

It is a digression, in the middle of a chapter that begins with a lamentation over the rejection of Christ by the mass of the people of Israel. He justifies the action of God in permitting this, by recalling that the promises to the children of Abraham were not to all the children, but only to the elect ones; to Isaac and not to Ishmael; to Jacob and not to Esau. And this election, to use a human mode of thought and speech, is purely arbitrary. The Apostle says of the sons of Isaac: "The children being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." It would be impossible to assert more distinctly the unconditionalness of God's election. But to what were Jacob and Esau respectively elected? There is here nothing whatever about election to any position, good

or bad, in the eternal world. Jacob was loved by God, and was elected to be a prince of God, and an ancestor of David and of Christ. Esau was loved less; this is all that "hated" can mean here; for, in the usual sense of the word, hatred seeks to destroy (this is Aristotle's definition); and so far was God from destroying Esau, that he was permitted to receive a blessing, though an inferior one to his brother's, and to become the ancestor of a nation. "The elder served the younger;" but service, even the lowest, is not reprobation, and is scarcely compatible with it.

In this case there is no moral difficulty whatever. But we cannot say the same of the instance of Pharaoh, which is the one which the Apostle mentions next. He says—I quote the entire passage, Romans ix. 17–24, inserting remarks of my own, and marking them [thus]—

"The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might shew in thee my power, and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth. So then he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth."

[It is to be observed that in Biblical language "hardness of heart" does not mean cruelty, but judicial blindness; and to say that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, means that he was abandoned to his own pride and obstinacy, just as the men of the Gentile world generally, according to St. Paul in this same Epistle, were "given over to a reprobate mind," as a punishment for "refusing to have God in their knowledge" (Rom. i. 28). In the ordinary Divine administration, the rejection of the means of grace is punished by their withdrawal; a truth which all systems of religious philosophy alike must accept as part of their data.]

"Thou wilt then say unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who understandeth his will?" [That is to say, Does not God's sovereignty, then, supersede and annul man's responsibility? If human actions are foreordained,

how can any man be judged guilty?] “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known” [an allusion to Verse 17, where “the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might shew in thee my power”], “endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted to destruction;” [fitted by what agency? This question is not asked nor answered here; but there can be no doubt of the Apostle’s belief that they are fitted to destruction, not by God’s will, but by their own fault. He does not say that God *makes* them so, but that God *endures* them. Compare 1 Timothy ii. 4: “God our Saviour, who willeth all men to be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth”] “and that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy which he afore prepared unto glory, even us?”

To the question, “Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus?” it would be possible to reply, “When the thing formed has received from him that formed it a power to sin and a capacity to suffer, it may reasonably say, Why didst thou make me thus?” St. Paul, however, does not contemplate such a reply as this.

The illustration of the absolute sovereignty of God from the power and right of the potter over his clay, is an allusion to Jeremiah xviii. 6. But does St. Paul mean this as a full account of the matter? Does he really mean that the relation of God to his creatures is fitly and fully symbolized by the relation of a potter to his vessels? The present writer well remembers, during early life, being repelled from the study of St. Paul’s writings by the belief that

such was his doctrine. But the rest of his writings contain ample proof that he did not regard this argument as exhausting the question; and the passage before us, even if taken alone, contains proof that he does not regard this argument, or illustration, as containing a full account of the matter. The inconsistency of the metaphorical language shews his consciousness that the illustration is incomplete.

Has not the Divine Potter a right over the clay of human nature, of the same lump to make one vessel for an honourable and another for a dishonourable use, but each for its own use? (Compare 1 Cor. xij. 22, 24.) Moses was a vessel of honour; he honoured God, and was honoured by God. Pharaoh was a vessel of dishonour; he is remembered in history for his tyranny, cruelty, and infatuation. But God had his own use for each. Moses, willingly and gladly, served God by leading Israel out of Egypt and founding the Israelite nation. Pharaoh also, but unwillingly and blindly, served God, by expelling Israel from Egypt; for had the Israelites been treated by their masters with kindness and friendliness, they would have been certain, so far as man can see, to be merged and lost in the Egyptian people, and there would have been no Israelite nation.

But though the Divine Potter makes at his own pleasure vessels of honour and vessels of dishonour, there is no suggestion in this passage, nor anywhere else in St. Paul's writings, that He makes vessels in order that they may be

"Destroyed,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void."

The forming of vessels for different and opposite uses is no doubt directly referred by St. Paul to the sovereignty of God's will; but this does not answer the further question concerning vessels which, so far as man can see, are of no use whatever, and fitted only to destruction. In a more abstract form, this is the question of the relation of the

Divine will to human sin ;—not particular acts of sin like Pharaoh's refusal to let Israel depart, but sinfulness generally. On this subject, St. Paul has absolutely nothing to suggest ; he only speaks of the longsuffering of God ; but where he speaks of vessels of wrath, he is careful not to mention the potter.<sup>1</sup> Whether conscious or not on the Apostle's part—and I believe it is perfectly conscious—this failure to carry the metaphor consistently through the passage is a confession that he cannot give a full account of the matter—that the difficulty cannot be fully solved.

At the end of the digression on election, the Apostle goes back to the more familiar subjects of the unfaithfulness of Israel, the calling of the Gentiles, and the salvation offered to those who will believe in Christ. These occupy the rest of Chapter ix. and the whole of Chapter x. But in Chapter xi. he goes on to a prophecy of the ultimate restoration of Israel to God's favour. This is one of the most remarkable passages in all his writings. It is a difficult passage, partly because the Apostle does not keep to the main thread of his argument, but goes off into digressions ; and it may help us to understand it if we read it with the omission of all that is not essential to the main argument, as follows :—

“I say then, Did God cast off his people? God forbid . . . God did not cast off his people which he foreknew Or wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elijah? how he pleaded with God against Israel, Lord . . . I am left alone. . . . But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have left for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of

<sup>1</sup> It is curious how the word “reprobate,” which in the language of Scripture means rejected on trial and as a consequence of trial, like a gun that will not stand the proof charge, came in Calvinistic theology to mean rejected by arbitrary decree, independently of trial. To my mind, this violent change in the meaning of a common and perfectly intelligible word, is a strong presumption against the truth of the theory under the influence of which the change was made.

grace. . . . What then? That which Israel seeketh for, that he obtained not; but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened. . . . I say then, Did they stumble that they might fall? God forbid; but by their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? . . . For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? And if the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, . . . they also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. . . . For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. . . . As touching the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of. For as ye in time past were disobedient to God, but now have obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so have these also now been disobedient, that by the mercy shewn to you they also may now obtain mercy. For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! . . . For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things."

Before we consider the meaning of this difficult passage taken altogether, let us enquire the meaning of the 16th verse: "If the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump; and if the root is holy, so are the branches." Are these two metaphors identical in meaning? Is this verse merely a speci-



men of parallelism, like that of Hebrew poetry? The meaning of the second clause admits of no doubt; the following verses shew that the root means the Patriarchs, and the branches the individual children of Israel; so that the same is here stated metaphorically which is stated without metaphor in the 28th verse: "As touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." But I venture to suggest that the meaning of the former of the two metaphors is different; that the "lump" represents the human race, and the "firstfruit" the elect Israel, the seed of Abraham, who is not only holy and blessed himself, but a blessing to all the nations of the earth. This interpretation would be quite inadmissible if it were not relevant to the context, but it is suggested by the mention, in the previous verse, of the world at large receiving a blessing through Israel: "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" And this is consistent with St. Paul's use of the metaphor elsewhere: "Christ the firstfruit; then they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23). Moreover, the same metaphor is used with the same meaning by St. James, who had much more in common with St. Paul than many are inclined to admit, and was the author of that circular letter which was the charter of Christian freedom and equality to the Gentile churches (Acts xv.). He says: "Of his own will begat he us by the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James i. 18). If this suggestion as to St. Paul's meaning is correct, the verse now under consideration (Ver. 16) means: "Mankind is holy for the sake of the elect Church, even as Israel is holy, and beloved (see ver. 28) for the sake of the fathers." But whether this interpretation is admitted or not, I see no danger of error in uniting the passage from St. James with that from St. Paul, and reading on from the one to the other thus: "He begat us, that we should

be a kind of firstfruit of his creatures." "And if the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump."

But this question scarcely affects the interpretation of the entire chapter. The chief difficulty respecting the entire passage is to determine of what the Apostle is speaking, and especially, of whom does he speak when he declares (Ver. 26) that at the last "all Israel shall be saved?" Who are the Israel spoken of? Is Israel here merely a synonym for the elect people of God, and is this to be read simply as a declaration that none of the sheep of Christ shall perish, neither shall any one be able to tear them out of God's hand? (John x. 28, 29). This no doubt is true, and a most blessed and valuable truth; but it ought to be evident to any one who reads the verse now before us in its connexion with what precedes and what follows, that this is not the Apostle's thought in the present passage. The primary reference is to Israel as a nation, and the whole passage is a declaration, that as the rejection of Christ by the Israelite people has led to the proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles, so the mercy now extended to the Gentiles will in the fulness of time be the means of bringing back Israel to the fold of God, and the entire nation will become obedient to God in Christ.

But is this all? What has the Apostle to say of those brethren of his who in his own time rejected the Saviour, and of whom he saw that God's wrath was coming on them to the uttermost? (1 Thess. ii. 16.) Had he regarded God's dealings with man from the same point of view as Moses, this would have been no difficulty at all; the question would scarcely have arisen. The blessings of the Mosaic dispensation were national blessings, and though the generation that came out of Egypt with Moses died in the wilderness, yet the nation of Israel entered into the Promised Land, and God's promise was kept. But could such an answer as this satisfy St. Paul, whose whole mind was dominated by

the thoughts of the resurrection of the dead, Christ's future judgment of mankind, and eternal life? When he said that all Israel is to be ultimately saved, is it possible that he only meant to say that every individual of the generations of Israel who shall live in the last times shall be saved, but that for the generations who have rejected Christ there is no hope? The rejection of Christ by his fellow-Israelites, he tells us, caused him "great sorrow and unceasing pain in his heart" (ix. 1); and for this was there no cure or consolation except in the thought of a salvation in the indefinitely remote future, from which they were to be excluded whom he knew on earth,—his kinsfolk, his playmates at Tarsus, his fellow-students at Jerusalem? Were these to remain under the wrath of God for ever? His words are inconsistent with such a belief. He asserts that the Israelites who have rejected Christ are to receive mercy at last. "Did they stumble that they might fall? God forbid" (xi. 11). "As ye (Gentiles) in time past were disobedient to God, but now have obtained mercy by their disobedience, even so have these also now been disobedient, that by the mercy shewn to you they also may now obtain mercy" (xi. 31).

But what of unbelieving Gentiles? The answer as to Gentiles is the same as the answer as to Jews. If salvation is universal for the one, it is universal for the other; St. Paul preached to the Gentiles a Gospel in which the principle of nationality was expressly abandoned (see the entire Epistle to Galatians). In the eternal world all such distinctions disappear, and "the Gentiles are fellow-heirs" (Eph. iii. 6).

Had not St. Paul believed in the final salvation of all, it appears scarcely possible that he could have ended his meditation on the fate of the historical Israel with the burst of triumph and praise which concludes the 11th Chapter; nor could he have said that "God hath shut up

all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all " (xi. 32), if he had believed that the disobedience and sin were universal and the mercy only partial. Nor do these words yield any consistent meaning, if we understand by them that God has shut up all the men of one generation unto disobedience, in order that He may have mercy on all those of another generation. Finally, St. Paul says in the concluding verse of the chapter, that *unto God are all things* ; that is to say, all God's creatures, however far they may have wandered from Him, shall be brought back in the fulness of time, when *God shall be all in all* (1 Cor. xv. 28).

Rejection is but for a time, and election is not to a place in a kingdom from which others are to be for ever shut out ; election means being chosen by God to be brought into his kingdom before the rest, and to be thereby a means of blessing to the rest. Abraham was chosen of God, not to any exclusive or selfish privilege, but that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Moses was chosen that he might deliver his brethren out of Egypt. And Christ, the chief among God's chosen (Isa. xlii. 1), came into the world that He might return to his Father, saying, " Behold, I and the children which God hath given me " (Isa. viii. 18; Heb. ii. 13.). The teaching of the 11th Chapter of Romans is that the elect and the rejected of the present dispensation are alike working, whether consciously or unconsciously, towards the realization of God's ultimate purpose of good to all.

For much of what is in the foregoing, I have to express my obligation to Archbishop Whateley's *Difficulties of St. Paul*, and to the Rev. W. A. O'Connor's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*.

JOSEPH JOHN MURPHY.

## EZEKIEL : AN IDEAL BIOGRAPHY.

### II.

THE prophet returned from the marvellous apocalyptic vision which had met his gaze on the banks of the Chebar, to the surroundings of his home-life. But the character of that life was altered, and his spirit was full of strange conflicting emotions, overwhelmed with the greatness and difficulty of the work to which he had been called. The thoughts that stirred within him were too great for utterance, and for seven long days he sat among them, as the friends of Job had sat (Job ii. 13), in unbroken silence. From that silence he was roused by another word of the Lord spoken to his inmost spirit. The work of a prophet was to speak and not to keep silence. The watchman of Israel was not to be as a dumb dog, as one who was blind and saw not the signs of the times (Isa. lvi. 10) ; but to stand upon his tower and give warnings of the coming judgments (Hab. ii. 1). There rested on him the tremendous responsibility of being answerable for the death of the impenitent who were so because they were unwarned. It was not for him to let the wicked go on in his wickedness, or the righteous fall from his righteousness, and yet hold his peace. What we call the temper of *laissez faire* was, of all tempers, the most alien from a prophet's calling. So only could he "deliver his soul," save his own life from the judgments of the wrath to come, if he bore his witness and gave his warnings without faltering.

It would appear, however, that this awakened sense of responsibility did not lead to any immediate action. It

brought with it rather the sense of the need of a fresh contact with the Divine Power which had called him to his work. As Elijah went to Sinai to learn something of the future that lay before him (1 Kings xix. 8), so to Ezekiel there came the message, "Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee." And so there was another vision of the glory of the Lord, before which he fell prostrate in adoring awe; and another revelation of the manner in which his prophetic work was to be accomplished. It is remarkable that he was not directed to any immediate utterance. The silence which had been before rebuked was now commanded. He was to keep silence even from good words and let the fire burn within him, consuming heart and flesh, seeming for a time to shatter even intelligence itself, and to lead to strange unconventional startling acts which might well lead men to doubt his sanity. But then the silence which he was to keep was to be more eloquent than speech. Its immediate result was that when the exiles among whom he lived saw him no longer sitting among them as one about to speak, but shutting himself within his house, they were irritated and piqued, and sought to compel him to break that mysterious intolerable silence. They broke into his house, and put hands upon him as if to drag him out into the public place of concourse, that they might hear his message. But for them there was as yet no message. As by a Divine constraint his "tongue clave to the roof of his mouth," and they found their efforts fruitless. Doubtless this reticence had the effect of stimulating curiosity, and the feeling, What will he do next? must have been uppermost in their minds. He knew, in his secret soul, that the silence was but for a time, perhaps relatively for a long time, but that in due course his mouth would be opened, and then, whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear, the "house of rebellion".

should hear his message from the Lord God of Israel. Meanwhile his teaching was to be dramatic rather than prophetic; an acted parable. Men were to gaze in wonder at what we can scarcely describe otherwise than as so many *tableaux vivants* of strange and terrible significance.

In so acting Ezekiel was following in the footsteps of the prophets who had preceded him. Isaiah had for three years laid aside the "rough garment" (Zech. xiii. 4) of the prophet, and put the shoes from off his feet, and had walked, like an Eastern dervish, "naked and barefoot" with nothing but a linen cloth tied round his loins (perhaps not even that), as a witness to men who were trusting in an Egypto-Ethiopian alliance, that this was the condition to which their allies should be reduced by the conquests of Sargon and his Assyrian armies (Isa. xx.). Ezekiel's master, Jeremiah, had dramatized his predictions by breaking the potter's vessel in the valley of Hinnom (Jer. xix. 1-10), by appearing in the presence of the ambassadors of the confederate kings who were stirring up resistance to Nebuchadnezzar with yokes and bands upon his neck (Jer. xxvii. 2), by his long journeys to Mesopotamia with their mysterious significance, which, by the very fact of his absence from Jerusalem, must have attracted the attention and roused the wonder of his people (Jer. xiii. 1-11). Ezekiel was now to develop the same methods of teaching in a yet more startling form. I see no reason, with the induction from these precedents before us, for accepting the hypothesis that in what follows we have only the narrative of a dream, or an allegorical symbolism, unconnected with any objective fact. If it is urged, in favour of that hypothesis, that the prophet narrates journeys to Jerusalem which were confessedly "in the visions of God," as in the trance of ecstasy (Ezek. viii. 3, xi. 1, 24), the answer is obvious, that the very fact that the prophet so described them proves that he knew how

to distinguish one form of prophetic teaching from another, and that the absence of any such description shews that he is recording not a dream or vision, but an objective reality.

The mode of action was indeed sufficiently startling. The Jews of Tel-Abib had been expecting him to speak, had even tried to constrain him. And instead of this they had to watch the successive actions of one who seemed, as it were, stricken with dumbness. The first tableau of the series was found in his taking one of the tiles or slabs of clay which abounded in all Chaldean buildings, and designing on it, with a graver's tool, the outlines of a city in which those who looked on it could not fail to trace the representation of Jerusalem. And, just as we see in the slabs which have been disinterred from the ruins of Koujuniyk and Khorsabad, he was to portray the siege of the city, the army of the Chaldeans encamped against it, the earthworks rising to a level with the wall surmounted by soldiers discharging their arrows and javelins at the defenders of the city, the battering rams ready for action. For a further indication of the fact that relief from any quarter, Jewish insurgents or Egyptian allies, was out of the question, he was to place a flat sheet of iron, such as was used for baking cakes of bread, in front of the representatives of the besieged city, as the symbol of the impassable barrier, interposed by the Chaldean armies to the passage of any such helpers. This pictorial prophesying was, however, not all. The spectators might think, buoyed up as they had been by the assurance of soothsayers and false prophets, that the siege would be but a short one, ending in the defeat of the besiegers and unattended by severe privations. As an acted protest against that delusive hope, Ezekiel was to go through a series of actions which remind us more of the life of an Indian faquir or of St. Simeon Stylites than of such ideas



as we commonly associate with the thought of a prophet of Israel. His normal attitude (for we are of course compelled to make allowance for inevitable exceptions) was to lie flat on the ground, as one crushed beneath the overwhelming burden of sin and its punishment, gazing at the symbolic delineation of the siege, with outstretched hand. And this was to continue for not less than four hundred and thirty days, during which those who looked on it were to understand, in the absence of all tidings from Jerusalem (the state of siege obviously precluding the despatch of any such tidings), that the operations of the Chaldean troops would drag on their weary length through many months and bring about the most horrible extremities of suffering. The actual duration of the siege was from the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, to the seventh day of the fifth month of the eleventh year (2 Kings xxv. 1-9), or over 570 days; but the prophet, with the characteristic Hebrew fondness for round numbers, and especially for numbers that had a symbolic significance, represented its duration by two periods amounting altogether to 430 days. The number was that which the records of Israel gave as that of the years of the sojourning of their fathers in the land of Egypt (Exod. xii. 41), and at least led men to contemplate the contrast between the Exodus in which that sojourning had ended, with all its bright hopes, and the miserable outcome of the life of the people since that period in the siege and capture of Jerusalem. Of the subdivision of the 430 days into the two unequal portions of 390 for Israel and 40 for Judah it is not easy to speak with any very definite precision. Possibly, still keeping to round numbers, the 390 years were intended as a rough measurement of the period from the rebellion of Jeroboam (B.C. 975) to the reign of Zedekiah (B.C. 599), that kingdom, in spite of the deportation of the Ten Tribes by Salmaneser, being still

thought of as having an ideal existence. Its whole course had been one of apostasy and corruption; it had represented ten tribes, while Judah represented only two, and therefore the punishment which was now falling on the latter was thought of as mainly due to the guilt of those ten tribes, each of them receiving as in the "forty stripes save one" of later Jewish practice (2 Cor. xi. 24) all but the full measure of its chastisement. The forty days assigned to Judah had, in their turn also, both a historical and a symbolical significance. The prophet would seem to have looked back to the beginning of Josiah's reformation as the starting-point of a new period of trial, and the forty years that had passed since them (approximately from B.C. 634 to B.C. 594) were therefore the measure of the guilt of wasted opportunities and multiplied transgressions. Historically the number forty, always the favourite round number of Israel, threw men's minds back upon the record of other transgressions and other punishments; the forty days of the waters of the flood, and of their subsidence (Gen. vii. 12, viii. 6), the forty days of the exploration of Canaan by the spies under Caleb and Joshua, and the forty years of the wandering in the wilderness (Num. xiv. 34).

The next stage in the series of dramatic teachings was even more startling. His neighbours of Tel-Abib, who were building their hopes on the speedy overthrow of the Chaldean power, were to learn to what extremities of famine their countrymen were exposed in Jerusalem. The prophet was seen to make his own bread, a strange coarse mixture of beans, lentils, vetches, with a small portion of the better cereals like wheat and barley, a compound probably such as we heard or read of as the food of the people of Paris during the Franco-German war of 1870-71. The daily ration of this wretched food, hardly eight ounces, was to be accompanied by an equally scanty portion of water. The staff of bread was to be broken in Jerusalem, and in

the words of Leviticus xxvi. 26, which had been impressed so strongly on the prophet's mind, they were to eat their bread by weight and drink their water by measure, with care and with astonishment (Ezek. iv. 9-16). The symbolic action of Ezekiel had almost taken a more startling and repulsive form. The terrible threat of Rabshakeh (Isa. xxxvi. 12) would seem to have come into his thoughts as certain to find their fulfilment in the horrors of the siege, and a strange over-mastering impulse in which, after the manner of the Hebrew prophets, he had recognized a Divine command, had led him to think that he must dramatically represent even that crowning wretchedness, and so pollute the miserable portion of his food in the very act of preparing it. Against that impulse, however, the instincts of nature, and the sense of his consecration as a priest, alike protested, and he learnt to feel, recognizing that feeling also as a Divine intimation, that he might be spared that element of suffering, and fall back upon a mode of preparation which, however repulsive to us, has never, in the absence of other material for fuel, been uncommon in the East.

In the next *tableau* of the series we trace the influence of Isaiah's imagery, with which the recollection of Rabshakeh's words would naturally associate itself, in describing the Assyrian invasion as the work of "a razor that was hired," shaving off the hair and the beard, which were the emblems of a man's comeliness and strength (Isa. vii. 20). The same instrument was, indeed, to serve as sword and razor. As a priest Ezekiel had been trained in the Levitical rule which forbade the priest to make baldness upon his head, or to shave the corners of his beard (Lev. xxi. 5); and he himself, in his ideal restoration of the worship of the Temple, emphasizes that prohibition (Ezek. xlv. 20): and yet the people saw him transgress that rule. With the ready apprehension of men accustomed to these forms of para-

bolic imagery, they could scarcely fail to discern the significance of the act itself and of those that followed. The destruction in various ways of the hair thus cut off would symbolize for them the desolation wrought by pestilence and famine within the city walls, by the sword of the Chaldean invaders, by the exile of the remnant that survived the horrors of the siege. It may be inferred, indeed, from the fulness of the prophetic reproofs which accompanied these acts that at this point the silence of the prophet was broken, and that he himself explained the meaning of his acts, and told those who gazed on him and listened to him, of the iniquities and abominations which had brought these punishments upon them, the evil arrows of famine, and pestilence and blood and evil beasts, which were to make them a reproach and a taunt, a proverb and an astonishment among the nations. (Ezek. v. 1-17).

Among those iniquities the prophet, who had grown up amidst the surroundings of Josiah's reformation, and under the teaching of Jeremiah, naturally assigned a foremost place to the worship of the high places, which had gradually become more and more identified with idolatry. Mountains and hills and rivers and valleys, the green trees and the thick groves of terebinths, had all been defiled with the orgiastic revels of their worshippers, and the incense smoke had risen to the vault of heaven; and so the prophet, stamping in the excess of his indignation, poured out his words of doom (Ezek. vi. 1-11). The sword, the famine, and the pestilence should do their dread work, and every place that had been desecrated by that evil worship should be covered with the carcasses of the slain. In that worship Ezekiel rightly saw the fountain head of all other evils; but, like other prophets, he felt himself also stirred to a righteous wrath by the social corruption which was eating into the heart of the nation's life. Pride and violence had budded and blossomed and borne their evil fruits. The

buyer had rejoiced in his hard bargains, and the seller had mourned as he parted with the inheritance of his fathers (Ezek. vii. 10-13). Men had trusted in the silver and the gold which should not be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath (Ezek. vii. 19). The land was full of bloody crimes, as it had been in the days of Isaiah (Ezek. vii. 23). They set up their graven images, as if they were things of beauty and of majesty, and trusted that they would deliver them; and therefore He whom they had scorned would bring in the "worst of the heathen" upon them, to possess their houses, and robbers should enter into the secret place of his sanctuary. In their panic terror they should be the victims of false hopes, and blind fears, and misleading counsellors. "Mischief should come upon mischief, and rumour upon rumour." They should seek a vision of the prophet, and should find none. The oracular utterances of the priests, and the counsel of the ancients, should alike fail. King and princes should alike mourn and be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the "people of the land" (the population of peasants and artisans) should be troubled. They should be judged according to their deserts, and at last they should know that He who thus judged them according to their deserts was indeed the Lord (Ezek. vii. 24-27.)

It lies in the nature of the case that this prophetic utterance was written or delivered towards the close of the long dreary period of dramatic action. The tongue of the prophet was no longer cleaving to the roof of his mouth. And it is accordingly significant that the next note of time in the collection of his writings (Ezek. viii. 1) carries us to a point which closely approximates to the end of the four hundred and thirty days, even if it were not, as, on the supposition of some inequalities or intercalary days in the Babylonian calendar, it easily may have been, absolutely identical with it. A year and two months, *i.e.* according

to our computations, 425 to 427 days, had passed since the first vision on the banks of the Chebar. We note, however, the intimation, intended perhaps to indicate that the period had not quite expired, that Ezekiel was still in his house, and that the elders of Judah sat before him, roused, perhaps, by that outburst against the mountains of Israel, to a more intent and expectant watchfulness. And then there fell on him a state of ecstasy which had scarcely a parallel in the history of any prophet before him. The hand of the Lord was again strong upon him. The glorious theophany which he had seen on Chebar was again manifested to him. The form of a hand (the symbol of Divine agency) was stretched out to lay hold on him; and then, whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell, lifted up between the earth and the heaven, he was carried, with the swiftness of thought, in the visions of God to Jerusalem (Ezek. viii. 1-4). With all the accuracy of a priest's memory he identified each spot which he thus beheld in the ecstasy of clairvoyance, and what he describes as having met his gaze, belonging, as it does, to the closing years of the reign of Zedekiah, when Nebuchadnezzar was about to make his final attack on the rebellious city, may help us to gauge the depth of its apostasy, and serve as an illustration of the section of the prophecies of Jeremiah which belongs to the same period. It is clear that the last traces of Josiah's reforming work had vanished, and that the confluent polytheism of the days of Ahaz and Manasseh had appeared in all its enormities. A closer survey of what met his gaze will help us to trace each form of the apostate ritual to its source.

(1) The prophet stands, so it seemed in his vision, at the door of the inner gate, "the gate of the altar, which looketh towards the north." It was probably the court of the brazen altar which Ahaz had removed from its old position and reserved for purposes of divination, when he brought

in the great altar after the pattern of that of Rimmon at Damascus (2 Kings xvi. 11). When Ezekiel had ministered in that court, the worship of the God of Israel had reigned supreme in it. Now he saw a rival *cultus* installed side by side. For him the horror of the contrast was intensified by his seeing there, what others did not see, the vision of the glory of the Lord as he had seen it in the plain, in its unutterable splendour; and side by side with it, receiving the homage which was no longer given to the God of their fathers, the "image of jealousy," *i.e.* as he himself explains it, the image "which provoketh to jealousy" (Ezek. viii. 3) as claiming the worship in which the jealous God, jealous because loving, could admit no rival. What that image was we are not definitely told. Havernick, who assumes that Ezekiel found himself in the temple while the people were celebrating a great Thammuz, or Adonis, festival, conjectures that it was the unseen image of that deity, laid, as one slain, upon a bier, over which, as in Verse 14, the women wailed and wept. Looking, however, to the fact that the Thammuz ritual is mentioned afterwards as something distinct and new, and that the obvious purpose of the prophet in recording this vision is to note the variety of idolatries that met his gaze, it seems more likely that "the image of jealousy" was that of "Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns," which we know from Jeremiah vii. 18 to have been the dominant *cultus* of Jerusalem at this period, followed by women of all classes with a wild fanaticism, and at least sanctioned by their husbands. Like the earlier worship of Baal and Ashtoreth it was essentially Canaanite or Phœnician in its nature, and its prevalence at this period was probably connected with the Tyrian alliance, to which king and people alike were looking with eager expectation as a defence against the attacks of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxv. 22).

(2) The next scene that met the gaze of the clairvoyant was yet more startling. In one of the crypts or cells of the temple, such as those mentioned in Jeremiah xxxv. 4; 2 Kings xxiii. 11; 1 Chronicles xxviii. 12; there was a secret and darker *cultus* carried on as with closed doors, so that the prophet could only become a spectator by enlarging an opening in the wall and so gaining entrance. The idol-worship which met his gaze was apparently Egyptian in its character. "Creeping things and abominable beasts" were "poutrayed upon the walls," and seventy men, ancients of the house of Israel, high in position and authority, a very Sanhedrin, as it were, of idolaters, were there, their number implying that they were the representatives of other apostates like themselves, offering incense to their idols. In that "chamber of imagery" there was a pattern instance of what was passing, as "in the dark," in the house of many a man high in reputation (Ezek. viii. 1-11). The mention of one of the seventy by name gives an historical precision to the narrative, and emphasizes the extent of the corruption. Of "Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan" we know nothing personally; but the latter name is prominent in the contemporary records of Josiah's reformation (2 Kings xxii. 8-12), and two of his sons, Gemariah (Jer. xxxvi. 12, 25) and Abikam (Jer. xxvi. 24), were among the protectors of Jeremiah. Possibly therefore the name of Jaazaniah is recorded by Ezekiel in his grief and horror at the apostasy of one whose family had been conspicuous among the God-fearing patriots of the time. The prophet knew enough of him and of his fellows to trace their idolatry to its source. They had come to believe that Jehovah had forsaken his people, and no longer knew or cared whether they worshipped him or not (Ezek. viii. 12).

(3) From this scene Ezekiel turned to another more open form of idolatry. At the gate of the Lord's house looking towards the north, there were women weeping for



Thammuz, after the manner of those of Phœnicia. Of that worship we can hardly speak without recalling Milton's lines, in which he speaks of one of the nobler rebel-spirits in Pandemonium as one

"Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured  
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate,  
While smooth Adonis from his native rock  
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood  
Of Thammuz yearly wounded. The love-tale  
Infected Zion's daughters with like heat:  
Whose wanton orgies in the sacred porch  
Ezekiel saw when, by the vision led,  
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries  
Of alienated Judah."

*Par. Lost*, i. 446-457.

The "love-tale," like that of Adonis and Aphrodite among the Greeks, was that of a beautiful youth beloved by a goddess, and dying early by a violent death, and thus symbolizing the brief duration of human joys, or elemental forces, the transitoriness of the brightness of the dawn, or of flowers born only to blossom and to die.<sup>1</sup> It would seem from the position which the ritual occupies in Ezekiel's ascending scale of abominations, that the lamentations were followed by even more corrupt orgies than those which accompanied the worship of Astarte.

(4) The two forms of evil that remained to be described were apparently connected with Zarathrustian worship, and are traceable to the intercourse with Elam and Media which had already begun to influence the belief and practice of Israel. At the door of the inner court of the Lord's house, turning their backs upon the Sanctuary, and their faces to the East, were seen twenty-five men (possibly the number, like that of the seventy elders, is representative,

<sup>1</sup> Readers of Plato will remember how he compares a surface knowledge or a counterfeit virtue to "the gardens of Adonis," small baskets or boxes in which flowers were planted that grew up and perished quickly because they had no depth of earth (*Phædr.* 2, p. 276, B). A reference to such gardens has been found by Lagarde and other scholars in Isa. xvii. 10.

as answering to the High Priest and the heads of the four-and-twenty courses), worshipping the dawning light of the sun.<sup>1</sup> Their idolatry reached its climax when they were seen, after the manner of the ancient Sabians and the later Parsees, to be holding over their mouths a branch of the sacred *Hom* tree, probably pomegranate or tamarisk,<sup>2</sup> as an act of homage or as a charm against demons (Ezek. viii. 15-17).

To the heart of the priest-prophet, as to the mind of Jehovah, it was no light matter that these successive *tableaux* should represent the religious state of the people. How was the evil to be remedied or punished? Was it possible to assert the righteous law of retribution and yet to preserve a remnant of the people as witnesses to the truth, who, like the seven thousand in the time of Elijah who had not bowed the knee to Baal, were yet faithful found among the faithless? The answer to those questions was found in the symbolic visions that followed.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

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## THE GOSPEL TO THE GREEKS.

(John xii. 20-36.)

### II. THE PARADOX.

*"He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."* (Verse 25.)

THIS paradox, under slight variations, was often on the lips of our Lord; even in our brief record of his teaching we

<sup>1</sup> It may be that this also connects itself with the Thammuz ritual. Adonis, in one aspect of the mythos, was a sun god.

<sup>2</sup> I follow the interpretation of most modern critics. By others the word is taken as proverbial, "They put a branch to wrath," i.e. "they add fuel to the fire"; or, "They put the sickle to their nose," i.e. injure themselves in their defiant insults to Jehovah.

meet with it again and again. And wherever we meet it, in whatever connection of thought, it instantly arrests our attention in virtue of a certain difficulty that we find in it. We quite understand that it is a compressed saying, full of matter, full of truth even, if only we could get at it, and that it is purposely thrown into a paradoxical form in order that it may attach itself to our minds, cleave to them, and set us on thinking how much it covers and means; for paradoxes are the burrs of literature—they stick. But our difficulty lies in getting at its meaning, in absorbing its contents. Nevertheless, we all have glimpses of its meaning I suppose, and half our difficulty in being sure that we have seized its true meaning springs from our natural repugnance to the moral ideal it sets before us.

Take it as it stands here, for example, and carry on into it the illustration of the Parable which precedes it. Imagine a grain of wheat to be sentient, and to have it at its option whether or not it will lie still in the granary, or be sown in the field. And, surely, there is no difficulty in seeing that, should it elect to remain in the warmth and comfort of the granary, it would both fall short of its proper function, its highest destiny and usefulness, and sooner or later mould and wither into absolute uselessness; while, if it elected to be cast into the earth, it would, on the contrary, reach its being's end and aim, would live and multiply, and yield its contribution to the wealth and welfare of the world. Nor can there be any great difficulty in inferring, as a moral from this parable, that there are certain kinds of deaths which men must die if they would both live and contribute to the life and well-being of their fellows; that they too are born for usefulness, for fruitfulness, and that they must willingly sacrifice whatever would impair their usefulness or render them unfruitful.

Take the Paradox in any connection, and is it difficult to see that just as the man who is always thinking how he

may preserve his health is only too likely to lose it, and to sink into a confirmed invalid or hypochondriac, so the man who is always studying how he may save his life is only too likely to lose his life, or all the sweet uses of it? To live is not by any means our first duty, but to do our duty even at the cost of life, if it can be done on no other terms.

This is the general scope and intention of the Paradox which was so often on the lips of Christ. And, taken in this general way, it is confirmed by our daily experience. For who are the men who, even in the judgment of the world, have saved their lives—carried them to the highest goal, turned them to the best account? Not those who have lived for themselves, for their own comfort, their own enrichment, their own culture or happiness mainly; but those who have scorned wealth and ease, who have braved all perils, endured all hardships, made all sacrifices, in order to advance the borders of our common knowledge or to promote the common welfare; those, in short, who have been willing to fall to the earth and die if only they might thus bring forth much fruit.

But if we would enter into the full meaning of this Paradox, we must study it in the light of the New Testament psychology. For the word here rendered "life" is, in the Greek, as the margin of the Revised Version reminds us, *psyche* or "soul." Now the Lord Jesus and his Apostles held and taught that, as there is a trinity in the Godhead, so also there is a tripartite nature in man. There is his *body*, his physical frame, with its organs and senses, and their several lusts or delights. There is the *soul*—the mind—which he shares with the animal creation, with its instincts and intelligence, in virtue of which he in some measure understands himself and the world around him, and knows how to make that world minister to his wants. And there is the *spirit*—the reason and conscience,

the moral sense, which raises him above the beasts, which is his special distinction and crown, or which he shares only with the unseen orders of being revealed to his imagination and faith. By the soul he is attached to the visible world, with its pomps and shows, its wealth and honours. By the spirit he is made free of the ethical and spiritual world, and comes to apprehend its laws and mysteries. Thus the soul stands, and mediates, between the body and the spirit; and according as it leans toward the one or the other, it determines the character of the man. If the soul lean toward the body, and finds its chief good and supreme delight in gratifying the senses and all that holds by sense, he becomes a carnal man; the soul subdues the spirit, with its passion for truth, righteousness, love, to its own baser quality. While if the spirit rule the soul, the soul subdues the body, and the man becomes a spiritual man; for *his* chief good and supreme delight consist in serving and walking after the spirit; and he subordinates to the claims of truth, duty, love, not the mere gratification of the senses alone, but also that pursuit of wealth, knowledge, distinction in which, left to itself, the soul delights—in short, all that is merely temporal and visible.

Now we may either reject or accept this conception of the nature of man with perfect honesty—holding, if we reject it, that on the lips of Christ it was but an accommodation to the current conceptions of his race and time. But for myself I accept it, not simply because I have received it from the lips of Him who “knew what was in man,” and bow to his authority, but also because it seems to me the truest and completest account of what I find in myself and see in my fellows, the theory which covers all the facts of the case, and most adequately explains them. But even those who reject it cannot but admit that this *is* the theory assumed in the New Testament, and that

we can only get at the meaning of our Lord's paradox as we apply it to his words.

If, then, we apply this tripartite conception of the nature of man to the Paradox before us, what it comes to is this: that he who loves his *soul* supremely, and will not sacrifice its hankerings after wealth, ease, distinction, to the welfare of his *spirit*, loses, wastes, destroys even the soul itself; while he who, at the call of the spirit, *i.e.*, at the prompting of truth, righteousness, and a pure unselfish love, "hates his soul," *i.e.*, treats its hankerings after comfort, wealth, honour, with a generous contempt, or duffs them aside with a generous indignation, saves even the life of the soul, and rises into the eternal life, the life that cannot die.

Lest even now the fundamental thought of this Paradox should be difficult to grasp, we may put it in one or two other forms. Death is the condition of all life; but the true law is that the death should fall on the lower forms of life in order that the higher forms may thrive and multiply. The man in whom the *soul* rules reverses this order: he inflicts death on the spirit to feed the hunger of the soul, sacrificing the higher to the lower. But the man in whom the *spirit* rules keeps the true order, sacrificing the lower to the higher: he starves and denies the wants and cravings of the soul whenever they would interfere with the claims of the spirit, lets them die, crucifies them, in order that the spirit may live.

Or, again: he who lives in the perishable elements of this world, and thinks that his true wealth consists in the abundance of them which he possesses, perishes amid and with these perishable things. But he who lives in and for the spiritual and eternal world, and lays up for himself treasure in *that*, dies to the perishable indeed and the transitory, but lives in that which abides for ever. Dies to the perishable, did I say? Nay, but rather it is he

alone who puts even the perishable elements of the world to their true use, and so saves his soul, as well as his spirit, unto life eternal.

Or, again : Selfishness is death in life ; self-renunciation, life in death.

We might throw the Paradox into many other forms, and possibly ought ; for I know no saying of Christ's which is so perplexing to many thoughtful and devout minds, none which I have found it more difficult to render plain and clear to my own mind ; but perhaps one more will suffice—one which, if it a little limits the immense scope of our Lord's words, may make their meaning more evident. The *soul*, as I have said, loves ease, wealth, distinction ; the *spirit* hungers for truth, duty, righteousness, love. If, then, a man so love his soul as to make comfort, opulent conditions, and the honour that comes from men, his chief or sole aim, while he neglects to cultivate the charity, the sense of duty, the quest of truth to which his spirit prompts him, does he not lose and destroy himself, even here and now ? Does he not sink into base and selfish moods which expose him to the scorn of those whose honour he covets ? does he not grow so ardent in his pursuit of wealth that he forgets to use and to enjoy it ? or, in his pursuit of comfort, does he not neglect plain duties—a neglect which promptly avenges itself upon him by sapping and destroying his comfort ? But if he does, he loses his soul, as well as his spirit. He not only loses, *i.e.* knowledge of the truth, the quick keen sense of duty, the pure joys of the pure unselfish love which does good looking for no return ; he also loses the very comfort, the very wealth, the very honour, of which he went in quest. On the other hand, does not the man who seeks truth, who *will* do his duty even at the cost of ease and gain, who shews a simple and unstinted charity even to the evil and the unthankful, besides saving and cultivating his spirit, very commonly save his soul also,

and win the very distinction and good-will, the ease and comfort, at which he did not directly aim, and at least wealth enough for all his wants, for all innocent and true enjoyments?

If the Lord Jesus had loved his life too much to part with it, would He have had the good conscience which feared no evil, or the respect and reverent affection of mankind—all that the soul longs for, as well as the pure and ineffable delight of spirit which He obtained by being faithful unto death?

We call this saying a paradox, and find it hard to understand. And yet do we not understand it well enough when we see it incarnated in a life or embodied in a tale? For who, after all, are the men whom we ourselves most reverence and admire? Are they the *soulish* men who care only for themselves, care only to be rich, only to be at ease, only to rise to conspicuous place and to force their name on the lips of their fellows? Or are they the *spiritual* men who willingly sacrifice themselves, and their own interests and cravings, in order that they may be useful and fruitful members of society, the leaders and martyrs of some good cause? What do we mean by *heroism* but just this power of subordinating self to the common welfare—this losing the soul in order to save it?

If we want a commentary on this Paradox which will make it clear to the simplest understanding, we may find it, not in the heroes of the historic page alone, but in almost every newspaper we read. Here, for instance, is what I have read in my newspaper on the very day on which these sentences were written. "Joseph Sieg, an engine-driver on the Pennsylvanian Railway, saved the lives of six hundred passengers by an extraordinary act of heroism." Extraordinary? Yes: and yet similar acts occur every day. "The furnace door was opened by the fireman, to replenish the fire, while the train was going



thirty-five miles an hour. The back draught forced the flames out, so that the car of the locomotive caught fire, and the engine-driver and the fireman were driven back over the tender into a passenger car, leaving the engine without control. The speed increased, and the volume of flame with it. There was imminent danger that all the carriages would take fire, and the whole train be consumed. The engine-driver, seeing [that the only way to save the passengers was to return to the engine and stop the train, plunged into the flames, climbed back into the red-hot tender, and reversed the engine. When the train came to a standstill, he was found in the water-tank, into which he had dropped, with his clothes entirely burned off, his face disfigured, his hands shockingly burned, and his whole body blistered so badly that he is not expected to survive." In the light of such a noble deed, such self-sacrifice, as that, is there any difficulty in entering into the meaning of the paradox, "He that loveth his life loseth it, and he that hateth his life saveth it"? If love of life, or fear of death, had held back Joseph Sieg from doing his duty, he might have been alive to-day, and yet dead to all that makes man man. Hating his life at the call of duty, and dying in the performance of his duty, has he not saved it—doing more for man and God in that brief moment than many do in threescore years and ten? *That* was the life eternal on which he entered, not when he died a few days after the great deed was done, but when he plunged into the flames to save others from the flames. And, whatever his creed may have been, who can doubt that Jesus loved him, as he loved the young man in the Gospels, and has recognized in him, under whatever disguise, a spirit akin to his own?

No, it is not the Paradox in itself which is so hard to understand, but our wills which are so hard to bend, our souls which are so reluctant to be controlled and brought

into their due subjection to the spirit. Our creed may be sound enough; but how many of us would have done what that brave engine-driver did, had we stood in his place? As many of us as feel that we could not have risen to his heroic level have the proof in ourselves that, despite our creed, we have not gone so far as he had gone to master what Christ Himself affirms to be a fundamental law of his kingdom; that we are not as yet so willing to lose our life at the call of duty as he was. And it therefore behoves us to ask ourselves whether we are, in any true sense of the words, hating and crucifying our soul that we may live and walk in the spirit: whether our love of truth is a passion, and our love of righteousness and charity a passion, to which we cheerfully sacrifice ease, wealth, or the pursuit of wealth, the admiration, and even the goodwill of our neighbours? That is a searching question for any man to ask of himself or of others—for which of us can answer it as he would wish to answer and knows he ought to answer it? but it is none the less a question which we are bound to ask at least of ourselves. For Christ, who did not love his life, but freely gave it up for us all, Himself assures us, with a solemn "Verily, verily," that if we do not thus hate our souls and all that our souls hanker after, we have not yet possessed ourselves of the life eternal.

Nor is it safe to plead, as many do, that they are at least earnestly trying to save their souls by faith in Christ and by a diligent attention to religious duties. For it is Christ Himself who says, "He that saveth his soul shall lose it." It is not our *souls* that have to be saved, but our *spirits*, that in us which seeks truth, hungers after righteousness, and breathes love to all mankind. And, in the Church, there is perhaps no commoner mistake than this attempt to save the soul rather than the spirit. For in what Church do we not find men to whom "heaven" means a

place in which they who are poor here shall be rich for ever, they who are here oppressed with toil shall enter into an everlasting comfort and rest, they who are unknown here shall be known and honoured? That is to say, there are only too many in every Church who project the lusts of the soul into the world to come, and hope to enjoy there the very gratifications which they have missed here! But such a saving of the soul would be a losing of it. What Christ bids us do is to treat this hungry soul of ours with a generous scorn and contempt, to love and pursue truth, not wealth; duty, not comfort; and the charity which shares all it has with others, not the honour which lifts us above others and separates us from them. And it is only as we do thus subordinate the soul, with its eager cravings, to the spirit's demand for truth, righteousness, love, that we become of one mind and purpose with Christ and can share in his salvation.

### III.—THE PROMISE.

*“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am there shall my servant be also: if any man serve me, him will the Father honour.”* (Verse 26.)

Here, then, our Lord, having laid his foundation broad and deep in Nature and in Human Nature, applies his law of self-renunciation to the Church, to the obedience of his Disciples. They can only serve Him by following Him; and they can only follow Him by sharing in the spirit of his self-sacrifice. He was about to take up his cross, to be lifted up from the earth upon it, a sacrifice for the sin of the world; the Highest giving Himself for the lowest, the Best for the worst, In Him, therefore, both his parable and his paradox find their supreme illustration. For did not *He* fall into the earth and die only to bring forth “much fruit,” a harvest with which the

world is still white? Did not He, in very deed, save his life by losing it? and would He not have lost it if He had saved it?

Assume that these Greeks came to ask Him to leave the hostile and ungrateful Jews, and become the honoured Sage and Councillor of a foreign Court. Had He listened to their request, He might have escaped the Cross, and have resided in a palace, or a college, surrounded for years with honour, love, and troops of friends; but what would have become of the work which his Father gave Him to do? how should the world have been redeemed and reconciled unto God? nay, how should He Himself have been other than dead to name and fame and use? The Name which is above every name would have been unknown, and He who is the Life indeed would long since have mouldered in an obscure grave, as dead as many another Eastern sage who, while he lived, was the pride of an Academy or a Court. Even if his *words* had kept his memory green, must we not have mourned over Him Himself as a "lost leader," a traitor to his own teaching, an apostate from the high cause He had espoused, instead of saying, as we can now say with sacred joy and reverence and pride, "Albeit his life was the fairest and greatest, and his teaching the purest and noblest, that the world has ever seen, yet nothing in his life became Him like the leaving it."

On the other hand, by being true to his Father and his work, He lost his life only to save it—lost it not without effort and pain, as we are reminded by his exclamation in Verse 27, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?" an exclamation to which we cannot listen without becoming aware of the natural and strong recoil of his soul from death, and of the strife between soul and spirit, between the lower and higher natures which were in Him. But this strife ended in the victory of the higher over

the lower when the inward debate closed in the resolve to pray, not, "Father, save me from this hour," but, "Father, glorify thy name." By thus losing his life in this world, He not only saved it unto life eternal; He also became the Author of eternal life to as many as believe on his Name.

This law of self-sacrifice, then, was the law of his own life, and must become the law of life to these Greeks if they would follow Him. That which is highest and best *in them* can only live and quicken life in others, it can only become vigorous, perfect, eternal, as that which is lower in them is subdued and mortified. Did they understand how much was involved in serving Him? Were they prepared to find their ideal in self-renunciation instead of self-culture, in self-sacrifice rather than in self-gratification? If they were and did, He would welcome them to his service as cordially as if they were sons of faithful Abraham: for, said He, "If *any* man," Gentile or Jew, "will serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall he also come"; and again, "If *any* man," Jew or Gentile, "will serve me, him will my Father honour." But let him understand that, if he would serve Me, he must deny himself, must be prepared to lose his life; let him understand that he must die to himself, and to all merely selfish aims, if he would walk in the path which I tread. If he will do this, his loss shall turn to gain. Not only will he save himself, by losing or dying to self, but him will my Father honour—as certainly honour *him* as He will glorify Me. In him life shall pass and rise into life everlasting, and whither I go thither shall he come. So that this promise is a double promise; it resolves itself into a promise for this world, and a promise for the world to come.

The promise for this world is, "If any man will serve me, him will the Father honour,"—a promise which sounds too good to be true. As we ponder it in our hearts we are

tempted to say, "What, *God* honour a *man*: how can that be?" It seems incredible that we should be able to do anything to win the respect, the esteem, the affectionate admiration of the Maker and Ruler of the universe. We *honour* those who are above us: how, then, can the Almighty honour those who are so far beneath Him?

And yet so long ago as the time of Eli and Samuel Jehovah is represented as saying, "Them that honour me I will honour," while "they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Here, too, the very structure of the sentence shews that the word "honour" is used in its usual sense, and that our Lord means to affirm that God sincerely reverences and esteems any man who lives for others rather than for himself. As why should He not? It is not true that we honour *only* that which is above us. We honour even a dog if he serve us with sagacity and fidelity, if, *i.e.* he acts on the prompting of that which is highest and best in his nature, and denies the greedy and selfish impulses of his lower nature. A common Latin proverb bids us "reverence" the innocence of the young; and even the worst of men have been stricken with awe at the spectacle of an unstained and virginal purity. And who does not honour the weak of this world when they overcome the strong, when they shew themselves brave and cheerful and kind, lovers of truth and lovers of righteousness, amid manifold temptations, from without and from within, to be disloyal, selfish, cowardly, indolent, and yielding? In short, we honour any one, however low in the scale of being he may stand, who is true to his better impulses, and who, that he may be true to them, imposes a yoke or a cross on his baser passions and lusts.

Why, then, should not the Most High honour us? why should He not reverence and love us if we, his servants and children, serve Him truly; if we are honest, loyal, brave, diligent, cheerful, kind, amid a thousand temptations

to be false and cowardly, lazy and surly, indolent, selfish, unkind? The greater a man is the more generously he appreciates, the more unaffectedly and unreservedly he reverences and admires, the moral victories achieved by those who are less richly endowed than himself, the virtues which they cherish, the self-mastery and self-sacrifice they display. And if men are made in the image of God, must we not infer that in proportion to his greatness will be *his* generosity, his reverence and admiration for any man who serves and follows Christ, for any man, *i.e.* who, though drawn on every hand to seek his own things, really lives for others rather than for himself, really values truth above wealth, righteousness before comfort, charity more than self-indulgence?

Must not He who is our Father, in whom therefore love quickens insight, see far more in any service we can render, any self-denying deed by which we help on his great work—the illumination and redemption of the world—than we can see in it; and put a far higher value on it than that at which even the kindest of our neighbours appraises it? How much did *Christ* see in the coming of these Greeks to Him which they themselves could not see, which even Andrew and Philip could not see! What joy it gave Him that “the Gentiles also” should be seeking life! What a holy strife and trouble it kindled in his soul, and what a divine victory and calm came out of that trouble and strife! And who was it that saw Peter, the steadfast *Rock*, in the wavering and inconstant Simon? who that saw in the poor widow’s two mites “more” than all the shekels of the Scribes? who that turned Mary’s “alabaster” of spikenard into a standing “memorial” of her throughout all the world? But Christ is the very brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of his person. We need not and cannot doubt, therefore, that if we walk after the spirit and not after the flesh, if we follow the promptings

of our higher and not our lower nature, if we deny ourselves and take up the Cross that we may follow Christ and be like Him, even God Himself will "honour" us, that He will reverence, admire, and love whatever in us is pure, whatever good, whatever honourable, whatever unselfish and fruitful. Even this fine motive and inspiration to a life higher than that which is natural and easy to us is not withheld from us. And if *this* will not nerve and animate us to live above the world, and the world's law, what will?

But there is a second promise in this Promise, a promise for the world to come. The man whom God honours cannot die, cannot lack any felicity which his Father can confer upon him. Life, in him, will rise and flower into life everlasting. There is an exquisite simplicity in the form which this promise of future good assumes on the lips of our Lord: "If any man follow me, where I am there also shall my servant come." Why, of course he will! If one man follows another, he *must* come successively to every spot which his leader has occupied, and will only rest where *he* rests. There is a kind of parable in the words; and in the parable the strongest of all arguments. Difficult as we find it to persuade ourselves that we shall ever share the everlasting bliss and glory which we confess that Christ fully deserves, though we can never deserve it, we can hardly resist the force of the argument when He Himself throws it into this simple and inimitable, this gracious and most encouraging form. If we follow Him, we must at last come to the place in which He awaits us.

All depends, therefore, on *following* Him, on our fidelity in following Him. God will honour us here, and take us to dwell with Him hereafter, if we make the law of his life the law of our life, and tread in the path He trod. And we follow Him and keep his law whenever, like the dog, the servant, the child of whom I have spoken, we are faithful and diligent, brave, cheerful, unselfish, kind; when-



ever we subdue and deny the baser elements and passions of our nature in order that we may live in that in us which is highest and best; whenever we are true though we lose by it, honest in scorn of consequence, kind even to the evil and unthankful, and do good to the unjust as well as the just. We serve and follow Christ, and win the honour which comes from God, when we walk by faith in spiritual and eternal realities, not by our perception of what will promote our immediate gain or comfort; when we rule ourselves that we may be faithful to the true ends of life, and deny ourselves that we may minister to the wants of others.

In this simple summary of the contents of this Promise, as interpreted by its preceding context, there surely is nothing technical or mystical, nothing which any plain man cannot grasp. Nor is there anything arbitrary, capricious, or excessive in the demand that, to serve and follow Christ, to live in those higher chambers of our nature which open heavenward, shall be our end and aim. It is our reasonable service. It is the plain dictate of our own good sense when once that good sense has been illuminated by the truths and hopes of religion. And yet to be true to it is, as we find the moment we make the attempt, to take up a cross. For is it not hard to deny the lower nature, with its hungry cravings for comfort and pleasure, for opulence and the good word of man? Is it not hard to follow after truth when untruth would save us from loss or shame, to pursue righteousness when unrighteousness looks easy and profitable, to shew charity when selfishness is so natural to us and so pleasant? Is it not hard to refrain from snatching at the indulgences which injure but allure us, at the gains which promise to enrich although they really impoverish us, and to press on to the best and noblest ends amid an endless array of temptations and doubts and fears?

The course to which Christ invites us, then, is one to

which our own good sense prompts us, and yet to flesh and blood it is most hard, full of loss and pain. It is a course on which we can only enter by a kind of death, and in which we can only continue by suffering death in many forms; and yet it is the one only course by which we can rise into a true life, a life which will prove itself to be true by flowering out into life everlasting. That it is our true life, and that it will blossom into life eternal, should be a sufficient "spur in the sides of our intent." But lest it should not prove sufficient, we are still further incited and encouraged by the assurance that, if we serve the cause and follow the example of Christ, God will "honour" us even here and now, and by honouring us bring a new strength and sweetness into our lives; while, hereafter, we shall infallibly reach that great home and city of the soul to which our path conducts, and arrive where He is in whose steps we have trodden, and there be changed into his image, satisfied with his likeness, and invested with his glory.

EDITOR.

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*THE GROWTH OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE  
RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AMONG  
THE JEWS.*

"MARTHA said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again (*ἀναστήσεται*). Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection (*ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει*) at the last day" (John xi. 21-24). Now how did Martha know this? It seems to have been a novel doctrine to some of the Apostles. At the Transfiguration, when the Lord told the chosen three

to communicate the vision to no man until the Son of Man should have risen from the dead, they received the word with perplexity, questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean (Mark ix. 9, 10).<sup>1</sup> But the Pharisees usually, like Martha, believed in a general Resurrection; hence St. Paul in their presence could appeal to this opinion with confidence: "having hope toward God which these men also themselves accept, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust" (Acts xxiv. 15), and could win over his accusers to his side by confessing himself a Pharisee, and declaring that he was called in question touching the hope and resurrection of the dead (Acts xxiii. 6). The Sadducees, in putting to our Lord the supposed case of the seven brethren (Mark xii.), take it for granted that He held this tenet; and Christ Himself speaks of it as one which his hearers believed, and condescended to offer proof of its truth only to professed unbelievers. Between the vague and obscure references to the Resurrection of the dead in the Old Testament and the open statement of the doctrine in the New, there is a world of difference. Without entering into a controversial argument on the subject, I will here give just an outline of the course of reasoning by which it is shewn that the earlier Scriptures are not silent concerning this great truth. We shall be thus prepared to trace its development in the interval between the close of the Old Testament Canon and the Christian era.

1. That the Pentateuch contains no reference even to a future life, much less to the Resurrection of the body, has been confidently maintained by many eminent scholars; and Bishop Warburton, as we all know, based his great argument for the Divine Legation of Moses on the assurance

<sup>1</sup> The words are: *συζητούντες τί ἐστι τὸ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι*, implying a general doubt as to the meaning of the expression and not merely as to its applicability to the Messiah. Comp. verse 82.

of this fact. That Moses refrained from using the doctrine of future rewards and punishments as a motive for obedience in this life is certain. With the manifest interference of God in human affairs ever before their eyes, with their daily experience of his moral government, the Israelites needed no appeal to future judgment in order to stimulate their submission to present discipline. Another reason for the absence of any definite teaching concerning the disembodied soul, was doubtless the tendency to idolatry among the Jews. The Book of Wisdom (ch. xv.) shews how Hero-worship opens the way to this sin; and more precise teaching about the conditions of life in the other world might have led to an apotheosis of Abraham and Moses, and introduced that Polytheism against which Mosaic legislation was so strongly arrayed. Further, till the Hebrews were ready for the revelation of life and immortality through the Gospel, the thought of the other world and the soul's existence therein was not one of comfort and strength to this people, and could not be urged as an incentive to virtue in the present world. Yet this does not render it antecedently improbable that intimations of the great doctrine were conveyed in some degree to the early believers. In conformity with this idea, some theologians, while allowing that the great lawgiver did not formally enunciate the doctrine in any enactment or document, assert that he delivered it by tradition, and that it was thus handed down to successive ages unto Christian times. This, of course, is merely a theory invented to account for the existence of the opinion without apparent support from the Old Testament Scriptures. It may be true or false; but we have no direct proof for it, and there is much to be said against it.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, certain passages in the Pentateuch are adduced by the Jews themselves as adum-

<sup>1</sup> See Warburton, *Divine Legation*, Bk. v., §. 5 vol. ii. p. 387 ff. ed. 1837.

brating the doctrine of future rewards and punishments and the Resurrection.<sup>1</sup> These are such as the following: "Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do he shall live in them" (Lev. xviii. 5), where the life offered is not to be restricted to temporal prosperity, but is intended to embrace the eternal life of the whole man restored after death, even as Christ preached to the inquiring ruler, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. xix. 17). We have the testimony of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. xi.) that no transitory promises satisfied the aspirations of the old Patriarchs; they looked for a city which hath foundations laid by God; they desired a better, that is, a heavenly country; they had respect unto the recompense of reward. And that they shall enjoy this heavenly city in a body restored from the grave was argued from another passage (Exod. vi. 4): "I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers." It is not said "to give *you*," or "to give your sons," but "to give *them*;" therefore because while they lived here they enjoyed it not, they must receive the promise in another life, "whereby," says R. Simai,<sup>2</sup> "the resurrection of the dead appeareth out of the Law." A similar argument is drawn from the form of expression in Deut. xi. 21: "That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them." "*Non dicit vobis sed illis; constat itaque ex Legge fore resurrectionem mortuorum.*" We may think such arguments singularly weak and inconclusive, but they are interesting as shewing what was the character of the Rabbinical reasoning in favour of this doctrine. Of no great weight is the

<sup>1</sup> The great authority on this subject is Manasseh Ben Israel, *De Resurrect. Mort.* Amstelod. 1636.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Bp. Pearson, *On the Creed*, Art. xi., note a, p. 638, ed. 1833. See also *Manass. Ben Isr.*, p. 10.

inference drawn from God's sentence on Adam (Gen. iii. 19). As Adam is already dust, he cannot be turned into dust; so the curse would signify, Thou art now dust and shalt be clothed again with dust ("return to dust") at the Resurrection. In the story of Joseph's dream (Gen. xxxvii.) when Jacob says to him: "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" it is annotated that the patriarch "observed the saying" ("sperabat rem ipsam") because, as Rachel was now dead, he hoped that she would rise again and return to earth. It need hardly be observed that it is not certain that Rachel was deceased at this time, and, if this were the case, Jacob's words may well apply to Bilhah, Joseph's quasi-mother. "I have set before you life and death," says Moses (Deut. xxx. 19), "blessing and cursing: therefore choose life." If to the carnal mind, dwelling only on temporal results, these words might seem to refer exclusively to the life on earth, yet a deeper view would see in them a reference to the promise of an immortal reward beyond the grave, even as they were understood by the author of the Second Book of Esdras (vii. 59) quoted further on. Again, the oft-repeated expression of "going to his fathers," "being gathered unto his people,"<sup>1</sup> implies a belief in the continued existence of the soul, not merely that the body was placed in the common tomb of a man's ancestors; for Abraham, of whom the phrase is used, was buried in the cave of Machpelah wherein none but Sarah lay, and Aaron found a solitary grave in Mount Hor, and the place of Moses' sepulchre was unknown. The same expression is employed in the narrative of the death of Jacob, though a long time elapsed before he was actually buried. So when our Lord, in proof of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, alleged the fact that God called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac,

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xv. 15, xiv. 8, xlix. 29. Comp. Num. xx. 26; Deut. xxxii. 50.

and Jacob, He was using an argument in accord with the Jewish thought of the time; He was appealing to a truth which their own Scriptures taught, viz. that after death the souls of the faithful were in God's keeping still, and that in some way He would in good time perfect their personality. The man is not soul only or body only; he is body and soul united in one person; and if God is the God of Abraham and the patriarchs, long dead, He is the God of their whole selves, which must look forward to a restoration to their original complex condition. The devout Hebrew knew, in the words of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 6), that "the Lord killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to *Sheol* and He bringeth up;" and considering the many and stern enactments against magic or necromancy, and, it may be, having experience of the power exerted by professors of these evil arts over the disembodied spirit, he would seize any intimation of the hope of being freed from the power of the grave and re-united to the body and restored to light and happiness. Without this hope the mere continued existence of the soul in Hades was a gloomy and uninviting prospect. We see this in Hezekiah's poignant sorrow at the thought of death (Isa. xxxviii.), and in the many expressions of hopelessness and distress which meet us continually in the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> *Sheol* in earlier days was regarded rather as a prison and the domain of the Prince of death, than as a place of rest and refreshment; and it was a much later age that could trust the dead to the "Lord, the lover of souls," knowing that "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and that no torment shall touch them" (Wisd. xi. 26, iii. 1). Not to dwell too long on one portion of Holy Scripture in which the doctrine was supposed to be taught, we may just mention that it was found in Moses' words (Exod. xv. 1):

<sup>1</sup> For this gloomy view of death see Job xiv. 10-13, xvii. 14-16; Ps. xxx. 9, xlix. 19, 20, lxxxviii. 4-12; Eccles. iii. 18-22, ix. 4-6, 10.

"I will sing unto the Lord"; in the enactment touching the year of jubilee (Lev. xxv. 10), that every man should return to *his family*; in the bestowing upon Aaron the Lord's portion *for ever* (Num. xviii.), while he did not even enter the Promised Land; in the assertion that "all that did cleave unto the Lord are alive this day" (Deut. iv. 4), their adherence to God making them immortal; in the promise to Reuben (Deut. xxxiii. 6) "He shall live and not die;" and in the exulting assertion in Moses' dying song, "I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal" (Deut. xxxii. 39), where are declared not merely God's omnipotency and the deliverance of Israel, but the Resurrection of the dead.<sup>1</sup> It would have been more apposite to have adduced the translation of Enoch, taken in connection with the rapture of Elijah, but Manasseh Ben Israel omits this entirely in his citations from the Pentateuch. He also fails to notice in this connection the raising of the widow's son (1 Kings xvii.) when the prophet prayed, "Let this child's soul (*nephesh*) come into him again;" the resuscitation of the Shunammite's boy by Elisha (2 Kings iv.); and the story of the dead man revived by contact with the same prophet's bones (2 Kings xiii. 21); all of which speak to us plainly of the Resurrection of the body. The Jews indeed alleged the passages cited above as proving the immortality of the soul, but they seem to have neglected to notice that they also illustrate, if they do not prove, the resurrection of the flesh. They have noticed the connection between the sacrifice of Isaac and the Resurrection, herein agreeing with the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 19), who speaks of Abraham "accounting that God was able to raise him (Isaac) up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."<sup>2</sup> They took also the brazen serpent as a type of the Resurrection,

<sup>1</sup> See *Manass. Ben Isr.*, p. 11 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Schoettgen, *Horæ Hebr. et Talm.*, vol. i. in Matt. xxii. 32.



arguing a *minori ad majus*. As by the serpent who brought death into the world God effected life and health, so from the grave and gate of death He brings to birth a new and better life.<sup>1</sup> But they seem to have failed to see the teaching of the death of Abel, which has been noticed by Dean Graves. It is inconceivable that God would have permitted one who was acting with his express approval to suffer a cruel death, while his murderer was allowed to live, if body and soul were not to be compensated by a future life.

II. From various expressions in the Psalms the Jews might have gathered, and did gather, intimations of the doctrine of the Resurrection. When St. Peter in his first sermon quoted the sixteenth Psalm as bearing witness to the Resurrection of Christ, though most of his auditors would not agree with him in this particular, they were accustomed to see in the words a reference to the general Resurrection. Some<sup>2</sup> indeed inferred from the passage that David's body saw no decay; but this merely confirms the opinion that they held the doctrine of the Resurrection, since the indestructibility of the body would be void of significance if it were not to be joined to the soul and live again. The forty-ninth Psalm, which contrasts the lot of the worldly and the pious, suggests the doctrine. While the former are laid in Sheol like sheep in the stall, with Death for their shepherd, the latter can say with confidence: "God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol; for He will receive me"; the grave shall have no power to retain the righteous; God will take them to Himself. Of similar character is the testimony of the seventy-third Psalm, wherein the seer considers the difficult question of the prosperity of the wicked, and finds his answer in the sanctuary

<sup>1</sup> Sohar in *Jalkut Rubeni*, fol. 144, 4, ap. Schoettgen in Joh. iii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> R. David Kimchi; and R. Isaac in *Midr. Tehillim*. Pusey, *Lect. on Daniel*, p. 502.

of God. As a dream is forgotten when one awaketh from sleep, so in the great awakening God shall despise them as nothing worth; but the pious are continually with the Lord, He holds their right hand, He guides them by his counsel in this life, and afterwards, in the great Hereafter, receives them into glory, takes them to Himself, who is the strength of their heart and their portion, not in this world only, but for ever. Such too is the assured faith of David; he is confident that he shall behold the face of God (Ps. xvii.), not in the flesh, for no mortal man can see God and live, but in the other life. "I shall be satisfied," he says, "when I awake, with Thy likeness." The awakening in these passages could only be predicated of that which slept, viz. the body. The continued life of the immortal soul could not be thus expressed.<sup>1</sup> So translating Psalm lxxii. 16: "They shall flourish out of the city like grass of the earth," the Jews argued that the Psalmist speaks of the bodies of the dead to be revived as herbs from the bosom of the earth; for it cannot be the fruits of the ground that are spoken of as arising "from the city."<sup>2</sup> The doctrine was confirmed by the expression in Psalm lxxxiv. 4: "They will be still praising Thee," where the future tense of the verb, and the word "still" imply a new and ever fresh praise, which shall be sung in the other world. Another passage adduced<sup>3</sup> is Psalm civ. 27-30: If after the spirit is taken away and the body is reduced to dust, by some miraculous change the spirit is to return to the body and the face of the earth is renewed, who, say the Rabbis, does not see that this must take place in the Resurrection? Commenting on the four things that are never satisfied (Prov. xxx. 15, 16), the grave, the barren womb, the earth, and the fire, the same teachers asked, what is the connection between the grave and the womb?

<sup>1</sup> For more on the subject of the Psalms, see Pusey, *ibid.* and ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Manasseh Ben Israel*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 21.

and the answer was: "Quemadmodum vulva recipit semen, et postea edit aliquod vivens, ita etiam sepulchrum recipit corpora defunctorum, et postea, die resurrectionis eadem reddit."<sup>1</sup>

III. As regards the famous passage in Job (xix. 25-27) we need not discuss the question of its most probable interpretation. The Jewish commentators seem for the most part to have seen in it no bearing on the final Resurrection; and those among them who have written on this subject, and have with curious ingenuity discovered the doctrine in the most unlikely quarters, omit all reference to the passage. The Septuagint version seems to favour the tenet: *οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι ἀένναός ἐστιν ὁ ἐκλύειν με μέλλων ἐπὶ γῆς ἀναστήσαι τὸ δέρμα μου (ἀναστήσει δέ μου τὸ σῶμα, A.S.<sup>2</sup>) τὸ ἀναντλοῦν ταῦτα*. To the same purport is the strange interpolation at the end of the Book, for which the Hebrew affords no authority, but which is found, I believe, in all the Cursive, as it is certainly in all the Uncial, Greek MSS.: *γέγραπται δὲ αὐτὸν πάλιν ἀναστήσεσθαι μεθ' ὧν ὁ κύριος ἀνίστησιν*. There is no evidence to shew that this is a gloss introduced by a Christian hand; it is more probably to be ascribed to the same school which produced the Greek translation. The opinion of many of the Fathers on the genuine passage of Job is vitiated by their ignorance of Hebrew; but the sentiment of Clemens Romanus may well be regarded as embodying one traditional view when he appeals to Job in confirmation of the Resurrection,<sup>3</sup> and Jerome is a competent witness of the propriety of such view, regarded as grammatically possible, when he writes<sup>3</sup>: "Quid hac prophetia manifestius? Nullus tam aperte post Christum, quam iste ante Christum, de Resurrectione loquitur. Sperat Resurrectionem, imo novit et vidit." Just as Christianity gives its own colouring to isolated statements of Holy

<sup>1</sup> *Manasseh*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> καὶ πάλιν Ἰὼβ λέγει· καὶ ἀναστήσεις τὴν σάρκα μου ταύτην τὴν ἀναντλήσασαν ταῦτα πάντα. *Ad Cor.*, xxvi. 3. <sup>3</sup> *Cont Joan. Hieros.*, § 3.0. II. 488, Vall.

Writ, which had quite another purpose in the view and circumstances of the writer, so the Seventy most probably imported their own later opinion into their translation of the paragraph in Job without considering the bearing of such rendering on the whole argument of the Book. The version therefore, and the interpretation, may be taken as representing the idea at which the Jews had arrived in the third century B.C. One passage from Job at least the Jews themselves adduce as supporting the doctrine of the Resurrection. When Job curses his day (iii. 13) and in his heavy storm of grief cries out, "Now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept; then had I been at rest"; this expression cannot refer to the soul, which does not sleep when freed from the body, but moves and energizes still; it must therefore apply to the body, which is said to sleep because soon to rise again.<sup>1</sup>

IV. As time went on, and God designed that men should understand his moral government to be one, not merely of temporal retribution, but extending into and consummated in the life beyond the grave, the prophets were inspired to give clearer intimations of the Resurrection. Thus Hosea (vi. 2) could say: "After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." There is nothing in the history of the ten tribes which fulfils this prophecy. They were never restored; no great favour was ever shewn to them after the captivity, which could be called by metaphor life after death. The utterance could only refer, as Christian commentators interpret it, to the Resurrection of Christ and of his members in Him, even as the Jews themselves explained it of the Messiah, though they knew not how it was fulfilled in Him. Their own gloss is this: "He will quicken us in the days of consolation which shall come; in the day of the quickening of the dead; He will raise us up, and we shall live before

<sup>1</sup> *Manasseh Ben Isr.*, pp. 23, 24.

Him."<sup>1</sup> And later comes that burst of exultation which Isaiah re-echoes and the Apostle takes up: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, where are thy plagues? O grave, where is thy destruction?"<sup>2</sup> No mere temporal deliverance could satisfy the scope of these great words; nor could the mere continuance of existence to the disembodied spirit be expressed in terms like these. The grave must give back its occupants, the body and soul must be reunited, to complete the ultimate design of this promised redemption. More plainly Isaiah cries (xxvi. 19): "Thy dead shall live, thy dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust! For thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead." Now whatever may be our opinion of the immediate subject of the Prophet's words, it cannot be doubted that his language would lose all its force if the hearers were not familiar with the doctrine of the Resurrection. Take the passage merely as a prophecy of the restoration of Israel to her country, her privileges and blessings, yet its imagery is drawn from the idea of the restoration of the body to life; it is illustrated by the Resurrection, and implies and demands a knowledge of the doctrine before it can be fully accepted and appreciated.<sup>3</sup> There can be no doubt, says Manasseh Ben Israel, that the vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel xxxvii. implies the doctrine of the Resurrection. If the passage merely symbolizes the restoration of Israel, or pictures the revival of a certain number of dead persons, it certainly contains the idea of a general Resurrection, and shews that such notion was a familiar one to the Jewish mind, and could be properly used by the prophet as a topic of comfort under distress and despair. David Kimchi sees the doctrine also in the ordinances of the New Temple (Chap. xliii. 19):

<sup>1</sup> Targum, quoted by Pusey *in loc.*

<sup>2</sup> Hos. xiii. 14; Isa. xxv. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Manasseh Ben Isr.*, p. 15.

"Thou shalt give to the priests, the Levites, that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord, a young bullock for a sin-offering," etc. This, he affirms, was never fulfilled in the second Temple, for Ezekiel died in Babylon; therefore, as God's promise stands firm, it must needs have its fulfilment in the world to come. And the Targum on Zechariah iii. 7 is this:<sup>1</sup> "Sic dicit Dominus, Si in viis rectis coram me ambulabis, et verbum meum observabis, etiam tu judicabis ministros meos in domo mea, et observabis atrium meum, et in resurrectione mortuorum vivicabo te." In plain words Daniel foretold the Resurrection of the just and the unjust (Chap. xii. 2), though this is not universally allowed by the Jewish commentators, some of whom most irrelevantly consider the persons spoken of to be those who were persecuted and slain by Antiochus. The prophet's words are these: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, to everlasting contempt." As to the use of the word "many," which seems to militate against the idea of a *general* Resurrection, it is well observed by Corn. à Lap. *in loc.*: "Multi dormientium, hoc est, multi dormientes, puta omnes dormientes. Dicit tamen multi, ut notet hos omnes non fore paucos, sed multos, q.d. Omnes dormientes, qui erunt multi, et pene innumeri, resurgent, sive tota multitudo dormientium, quæ plurima est, resurget. Sensus est, omnes qui mortui sunt resurgent." And he instances the use of "many" for "all" in Matthew xxvi. 28: τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυνόμενον, and in Romans v. 19. The last verse of Daniel was supposed to adumbrate the doctrine of the Resurrection. "But thou, go thou thy way to the end; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Two things, says Manasseh Ben Israel, are here promised to Daniel by the angel: (1) that when he comes

<sup>1</sup> Schoettgen, *Horæ Hebr. et Talmud.*, in Joh. vi. 36.

to the end, *i.e.* death, his soul in the world of spirits shall enjoy the good reward of the just; and (2) that he shall be awakened in the end of the days, *i.e.* at the Resurrection, and be happy for evermore.

V. The doctrine of the Resurrection, though known to individuals in early days, and revealed, as we have seen, more or less clearly in the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament, seems to have gained more general acceptance in the time of the exile. It was held certainly by the Persians and the Chaldeans, who may unconsciously have influenced the belief of the Hebrews. Sojourning in a strange land, praying ever that the Lord would turn their captivity, with no comfort in their present affliction, what was more natural than that the Jews should direct their minds to the future, and look forward to another life which should compensate them for their existing calamity? In accordance with this idea we find in the works written after the Return which have come down to us, especially those composed in Egypt, a plainer recognition of the future state and of the Resurrection of the body. Very dimly expressed in some, very clearly in others, the great truth starts forth here and there, and prepares us for its full acceptance in Christ's day. It was persecution, martyrdom, suffering, that brought the doctrine into prominence, and caused it to assume the force of a moral motive in men's minds. The mode in which and the means whereby the Resurrection should be effected, were scarcely handled; the time of its consummation was vaguely declared; but the bare statement exerted a mighty power, which was not weakened by questions of detail. Whatever may have been the reason for the difference, the documents which had their birthplace in Alexandria are much more decided in their statements concerning the Resurrection than those which were produced in Palestine. The latter for the most part do not go beyond the received idea of a shadowy realm peopled

with spirits, into which the death of the body is the passport. "The dead that are in the graves, whose souls (*πνεῦμα*) are taken from their bodies," says Baruch (ii. 17), "will give unto the Lord neither praise nor righteousness." It could not have been from contact with Western civilization and philosophy that the Alexandrian Jews learned the doctrine of the Resurrection of the body. How utterly strange to the Greek mind it was, we see from the way in which the Athenians received it at the mouth of St. Paul (Acts xvii. 32). Æschylus utters the general sentiment of his countrymen when he says (Eumen. 651):

*ἅπαξ θανόντος οὗτις ἔστ' ἀνάστασις.*

And Pliny only confirms the common opinion of antiquity in asserting that to raise a body from the grave was a miracle which even the Deity itself could not effect. The words are sad, but are worth quoting: "Imperfectæ vero in homine naturæ præcipua solatia, ne Deum quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, si velit, quod homini dedit optimum in tantis vitæ poenis; nec mortales eternitate donare, nec revocare defunctos" (*Nat. Hist.*, ii. 5). Cicero, when he discusses the nature of the soul and its connection with the body, and adduces the various opinions of philosophers on this mysterious subject, never makes any allusion to the restoration of the flesh, or alleges that any writer ever held such an opinion.<sup>1</sup> And Lucretius writes (iii. 941):

"Major enim turbæ disjectus materiai,  
Consequitur leto; nec quisquam expergitus exstat,  
Frigida quem semel est vitæ pausa sequuta."

In Homer, Achilles speaks, as of an incredible thing:

"Gods, I behold a miracle! Ere long  
The valiant Trojans whom myself have slain  
Shall rise from Erebus." (II. xxi. 54 ff).

<sup>1</sup> See especially *Tuscul. Disput.*, I. 9, 10.



## *THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.*

### VII. CIVIL AND SOCIAL DUTIES.

#### *Chapter iii. 1-3.*

THE directions given by St. Paul in the second Chapter refer to domestic life: those to which he now proceeds in the third, to the public or social conduct of the Cretan Christians. They fall under two classes; for a Christian's duty to society comprises: (1) a right attitude to civil authority in the State, and (2), a becoming behaviour in private intercourse. On both points, the Apostle has some appropriate counsel to give.

I. If we would do justice to the first group of directions, we must remind ourselves of the political situation with which his agent Titus had to deal. Throughout the ancient world, authority, whether domestic or civil, wore a more severe countenance than it does with us, and pressed with what we should consider an excessive weight upon the subject classes. It was so within the little kingdom of the family. Roman, as well as Hebrew, law gave to the father an almost unlimited control over his children, and to the master despotic power over his slaves. It was inevitable that the entrance of Christianity should beget in the slave, and in the child, some impatience of this domestic tyranny. The baptized bondsman was strongly tempted to resent the mastership of a heathen lord, now that he had been taught the spiritual equality of all men before God, and knew himself to be a freeman of Christ. The converted son was certain to dispute his parent's interference with the new allegiance which he had learnt to pay to his Father in heaven. It became necessary to warn "believing children" against "unruly" behaviour, and to charge slaves "to be obedient to their own masters." Otherwise

the new Faith would not have been "adorned" and commended, but discredited, in the eyes of the heathen public.<sup>1</sup>

Precisely similar was the danger which arose in political life. The rule of Rome, which then lay upon all those lands in which the Gospel was being preached, was a rule which rested on the sword. Everywhere ancient nations had been subjugated, venerable thrones had been overturned, the freedom of commonwealths jealous of their independence had been ruthlessly suppressed; and, although it was the policy of Rome to leave the old forms of administration untouched wherever possible, it was of course as impossible to conceal from the conquered peoples the degrading tokens of their subjection, as it is for us to do so in our Indian Empire. Roman troops sentinelled the palaces where Roman proconsuls sat in the seats of dethroned kings; Roman judges administered the law; writs ran in the Roman tongue; oaths were sworn to the Roman Cæsar; taxes were paid in Roman coin. The military power which imposed such subjection upon haughty and once mighty nations was at the best a heavy yoke. The imperial laws were on the whole just, but they were stern and could be mercilessly enforced. Nor were the imperial courts above the imputation of corruption. The imposts were very heavy. Provincial governors were usually rapacious. The provincial revenues were drained off to feed the monstrous dissipation of the Capital. For the most part, therefore, the provinces groaned beneath a burden which the strongest of them was unable to shake off, but which was enough to goad the most passive into turbulence.

It was into a society thus honeycombed with political disaffection, and ready at every point to burst into revolt, that Christianity entered with its new conceptions of human dignity and spiritual freedom. Its entrance could not fail

to add to the ferment. It quickened in men's minds that sense of injustice which oppression breeds. It deepened their irritation at the insolence and wrong-doing of the dominant race. It produced a longing for the happier era when the Kingdom of God, which they had received into their hearts, should be also a kingdom of social equity and brotherhood. Hence it became an urgent duty with the leaders of the young society to warn their converts against political restlessness. Do as they might, the Christians could hardly hope, under a government like Nero's, to escape suspicion. They were pretty certain to be reckoned among the dangerous forces in a community which heaved with discontent. But to do anything to encourage such suspicion, or afford the authorities a pretext for repression, would have been foolish as well as wrong; for it would have compromised the Gospel at its outset by mixing it up in matters with which the Gospel has nothing directly to do. Indirectly, no doubt, the new faith was sure to affect in the long run political affairs, as it affects every province of human life. No community of brave men who are animated by the lessons of Christianity will always sit still, contented in a condition of vassalage. The Gospel has proved herself the mother of freedom. The most resolute and successful resistance that has ever been offered to arbitrary power has been offered by men whom the truth had made free and who carried their Bible beneath the same belt to which they buckled their sword. But personal and political liberty is a secondary effect of the Gospel, after it has penetrated the structure of society and has had time to reform nations on its own lines. For the individual convert in the age of Paul to revolt against the emperor or to run away from his master, would have been to misrepresent his faith to his contemporaries. The question at what time or in what way a Christian State is justified in deposing its tyrant, in order to organize

itself as a free commonwealth, is a question which, as it concerns the Christian community and not the individual merely, so it can only arise under a different condition of things altogether. What the Gospel enjoins upon private citizens, so long as governments stand and a successful resistance by the people at large is out of the question, is—submission. They are to discern underlying all authority, so long as it is legitimate, a Divine ordinance, and to render such obedience as is due to the magistrate within his proper sphere, not merely through dread of consequences, but still more for the sake of a good conscience towards God.<sup>1</sup>

It is curious to observe that the two Churches to which Paul addressed the most explicit instructions on this subject were those of Rome and Crete. Rome was the natural focus for the dissatisfied and lawless. There the venality of the court, the license of the aristocracy and the corruption of justice, were most conspicuous. To it every complaint was carried; in its purlieus every conspirator could most securely lurk. Some years before St. Paul wrote his warning to Rome, the government had made a raid upon the turbulent Hebrew population of the capital, and with the Hebrews the Christians were as yet mingled and confounded. In Crete, likewise, local reasons existed to call for a similar warning. For one thing, it was a nest of Jews; and, wherever Jews were found, they were noted as fomenters of disaffection. Nor did the native population of the island stand in any need of foreign instigation. A hundred and twenty years earlier, their democratic constitution had been abolished by a Roman general, and the island, annexed to an adjoining province, had been placed under the orders of a Proprætor. But the islanders never took kindly to their new masters, any more than they have since taken to the Turks. In Paul's day, as in our own,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 1-7.

Crete was a restive dependency, whose Greek population struggled at intervals, but struggled in vain, to recover its lost prerogative of self-government. It was, therefore, thoroughly prudent and pertinent advice which Paul sent to the Christian converts when he bade them "submit to lawful authorities, yield obedience to their orders, and be prompt for whatever good action they might enjoin."

II. Of still greater consequence for the repute of their religion were the instructions which follow. These refer to the spirit in which a Christian is to behave toward his unbelieving neighbours in social intercourse. A handful of converts in the midst of a swarming heathen population occupies everywhere a difficult position, but at the same time it sustains a peculiar responsibility. The case of modern mission churches in China or India resembles very closely that of St. Paul's converts. They are imperfectly cured of their old habits. Yet with the vices of paganism scarcely eradicated, they cannot escape contact with pagan example, but are compelled to breathe a vitiated moral atmosphere, and are pressed on every hand by idolatrous usages and unchristian modes of thought. Besides, they are daily exposed to rude remarks, or even to abuse, for the singularity of their religion. Petty acts of mischief are perpetrated at their expense, for which no remedy can be found. Occasionally a grosser outrage occurs, which must be endured as they best can. Even when the government is a tolerant one, and its officials are either indifferent or well-disposed, public dislike of the "foreign superstition" is at no loss for disagreeable and vexatious ways of expressing itself.

All this is hard to bear, especially for men just emerging out of heathenism; and it was made worse for the Cretans by their national habit of giving a loose rein to the temper and tongue. The lower orders in the seaports of the island were noted as a passionate people, rude in manner, quick to

take offence, and, when provoked to a brawl, by no means nice in their employment either of vituperation or of violence. We know pretty well what the scum of a Greek port is like to this day. It was hard work to teach such men Christian meekness or patience under provocation. Yet if the Cretan Christian shewed himself not less prompt to resent an insult than ever, if in the wineshop he flew into a passion as readily as his comrade who still swore by Jupiter, if the insolent speech, the quarrelsome temper, and the hasty knife were not exchanged for demeanour more becoming the disciples of Jesus—what the better was the man for his Christianity, or how could his fellows learn to respect his new faith?

The graces, therefore, which, more than any other, St. Paul desired his delegate to urge upon these converted islanders, were just those characteristic virtues of the Christian life which formed the strongest contrast to their former habits. They were never to let a word of abuse pass their lips. They were to keep themselves clear of brawls and quarrels. They were to give way before insolence or injury rather than resent it. In short, they were to display towards all sorts and conditions of men every form of Christian meekness. Meekness is a quality which heathenism has everywhere scouted as mean-spirited, but which it is the honour of the Gospel to have canonized. By it is meant such an inner condition of mind as, springing out of penitence for sin with a profound appreciation of the Divine Mercy, predisposes one to forbear and forgive the injurious treatment of others. At bottom it has nothing in common with pusillanimity. But it takes its origin in that peculiar religious exercise called conversion. It is after the taproot of human pride has been cut through by a thorough discovery of one's sinfulness before God, and the sinner has been reduced to beg for unmerited mercy as a free gift at the hand of the Most High, that the heart, pardoned and

tender, grows susceptible of genuine meekness. Then humbleness enters, and a mild charity for all men, and the conviction that one who has himself done so much evil ought to bear with evil in others—that he who owes everything to mercy needs to be above all things merciful.

It might well appear a difficult undertaking to persuade the quick ungoverned boatmen of a Mediterranean harbour to check the biting repartee upon their tongues, or listen with the patience of a saint to the jibes of some tipsy comrade, or take with gentleness the deliberate rudeness of some fanatical Jew. But Paul knew what moral change, more strange than magic, had come over these men since they had welcomed Christ's new message. He had felt by experience what transforming virtue resided in that Gospel to remodel their very nature, turning the lion into a lamb. Therefore he did not despair of making them to their astonished neighbours the models of an unheard of virtue, if only they would give to the facts of their own conversion their full influence over daily conduct.

The splendid sentence which opens with the third, and only closes with the seventh, verse of this Chapter, comprises a mass of central and precious teaching, the unfolding of which must be reserved for another paper. It is packed so full of evangelical truth as to sparkle among the minor Epistles as one of their most conspicuous and memorable passages. It should be noticed, however, that it enters into the current of Paul's letter simply as an argument to sustain his plea for meekness. It is no digression. It assigns the reason why the Apostle expected his Cretan friends to exhibit under trying circumstances so rare a gentleness. It involves the powerful motives to which he trusted for such a victory over nature and habit. No man is fonder than he of running back the homeliest duties to their roots in the most central and awful doctrines of the faith; and we must attempt, ere we close, to do justice

at least to the argumentative value of the passage which follows.

The whole sentence is in form a contrast. It reminds the Cretans of what they had been in their unconverted condition. Against that it sets their present position as Christians. It grandly magnifies the Divine grace which had made them to differ. Out of this little biographical sketch there sprang two arguments for a meek behaviour.

In the first place: These heathen neighbours, whose abusive attitude is so irritating, are not at all different from what you used to be. Recall what you were before God's grace changed you: precisely such as they are to-day. You did not then see your own foulness—not then, before the light came; neither do they see theirs now. Yet contemplate the hateful picture! What is pagan life? (a) So dark on religious matters as to possess no true acquaintance with God nor any just apprehension of spiritual truth at all; (b) as a result in part of this ignorance, disobedient in practice to all the requirements of Divine law; (c) deluded indeed and misled to false conceptions of duty and false superstitions in worship; (d) worse than that, enslaved to the desire for enjoyment, given over to indulgence in what seems most pleasant, no matter how immoral; (e) socially, leading a life too selfish to be either just or generous to others, cherishing rancour against one another for imagined slights and jealousy on account of superior fortune. Is this a just picture of the natural life as it mirrors itself in the enlightened Christian conscience? Sum it up in a single word: Are not such men repulsive as well as repellant—hateful as well as hating? Yet such were you. By the recollection of your former state, remembering the old darkness out of which you indeed have been rescued but not they, bear with them tenderly, think of them kindly!

To this argument, a second joins itself: Out of that



universal degradation of unregenerate nature, how is it that you have been rescued? By an effort of your own, or by Another's favour? Nay: not through any righteous actions or meritorious struggles to grow better, as you very well know; but through the mere mercy and cleansing and renewing power of "God our Saviour"; by a salvation which came to you unsought, found you helpless, surprised you with its benefits, and by its own virtue made new men of you in that day when you turned from your idols to become through Jesus Christ the heirs of life eternal! Saved thus by the sheer philanthropy of Heaven, have you none for your unsaved brothers? Changed by Divine mercy from a state like theirs, where is your mercy to them? They are as you were: treat them, then, as God treated you! How if He had been as resentful against us, as quick to take offence and ready to strike? Ah, how ill it becomes a Christian to speak evil of others, to brawl, to give back word for word and blow for blow! By the kindness your Saviour has returned for your wrong, shew to your still wrongful fellows what is that love of God to man which has been manifested unto you; that they too may be won to taste that God is good!

Thus have I tried to read back into the brief reasoning of the Apostle a little of its original force, addressed as it was to a few converts out of prevalent heathendom; for, so read, his words may perhaps recover a certain freshness to our minds and the edge of his argument be whetted. But to ourselves, if we have been turned from the selfish and godless life of nature, the appeal carries equal force. There is scarcely anything in which a chastened, or, as I may say, *Christened*, temper discovers itself so unmistakeably and with equal charm, as in sweetly bearing the rude or angry antagonism of irreligious people. Still, as in Crete, meekness sits well on the forgiven. Still the amazing example of Him who might have "ta'en the vantage"

when our "lives were forfeit," pleads with his followers for forbearance. Still God's "philanthropy" breathes an inspiration and prescribes a model. By the memory of his spontaneous grace which made us what we are, let us reach after that crown of saintliness, the meekness that beareth all things and forgiveth all things for Christ's dear sake !

J. OSWALD DYKES.

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## THE REFORMERS AS EXPOSITORS.

### II. LUTHER.

THAT the services of Luther to the cause of Biblical Interpretation were immense, and indeed unique, is acknowledged by nearly every one who has touched on the History of Exegesis. Unhappily, there is no good book on Luther as an Expositor; yet he did more than any one to give force and currency to the principles which had originated with his ablest predecessors, from Nicolas of Lyra down to Laurentius Valla, and which had found in Erasmus their most powerful exponent. Luther gave to Germany an open Bible written in a style which has moulded and permeated the whole German language. His Commentary on the Galatians<sup>1</sup> is his only complete and continuous contribution to the Exegesis of the New Testament, yet it was that single work which led to the conversions of John Bunyan and John Wesley, whose religious influence has been as powerful as that of any teachers in the last three centuries. Luther's German Bible may be regarded as being in many places a most valuable commentary, and in his Prefaces, his Sermons, his doctrinal works, his polemical treatises, and his Table-talk, he enunciated rules to which the com-

<sup>1</sup> 1519. Re-edited in 1524 and 1535.

plete revolution of exegetic methods which has taken place in modern times has been principally due.

The famous old saying, "*Si Lyra non lyrasset Lutherus non saltasset et mundus delirasset*," or as it sometimes runs, "*Nemo Doctorum in Bibliam saltasset*," only possesses a partial truth. Luther no doubt learned much from Nicolas of Lyra, but he was led to his final conclusions during the course of that divine education which constitutes the real history of his life. His most effectual lessons were learnt from the Holy Spirit of God amid the agonies and struggles of intellectual and spiritual conflict.

His advance was gradual.—

i. As an Augustinian monk at Erfurdt, till the age of twenty-six (A.D. 1508) he knew no Greek and no Hebrew, and had never seen—by which we must understand, I suppose, that he had never *read*—a complete Bible.<sup>1</sup> At this period he found a Vulgate in the library of his monastery, and for the first time realized that it contained something more than the Church Lectionaries. He read it with diligent assiduity, much to the surprise of the excellent Staupitz; and the mere fact of his doing so led to his being suspected of heterodoxy.<sup>2</sup> Yet at first he was entirely in the bonds of ecclesiastical tradition. He did not refer to the original tongues, and contented himself with the *Glossa Ordinaria*, having been hitherto taught to dislike the Postills of Nicolas of Lyra. It was, however, during this epoch that his whole soul and life were influenced by the words which St. Paul quotes from Habakkuk, "The just shall live by faith."

<sup>1</sup> This he expressly asserts in his Table-talk. It is, however, a curious and unexplained circumstance; for, as Dr. Beard has recently pointed out in his Hibbert Lectures, the University of Erfurdt in the fifteenth century had given considerable attention to Biblical studies.

<sup>2</sup> The edict of Charles V. for the Netherlands shews that the common reading of the Bible was regarded by the Romish Church as a crime worthy of death by burning.

ii. For nearly ten years more, till the year 1517, he remained in this stage; and though he gave expository Lectures on the Bible at Wittenberg, he still contented himself with the Vulgate, and wrote in servile dependence upon the Fathers.

iii. In the four following years (1518-1521), when he was already at the ripe age of thirty-seven, he made the great advance which was continued through the remainder of his life. He began to study Hebrew and Greek, and attaching less and less importance to the views of the Fathers, drew largely on his own spiritual experiences. The striking anecdote of the delight which he felt when first he discovered that the *pœnitentia* of the Vulgate corresponded to "*repentance*" and not to "*penance*"<sup>1</sup> is an illustration of the tendency of words often repeated "to ossify the organs of the intelligence," and, as Bacon says, to react upon the understanding like a Tartar's bow. Nothing could have more surely revealed to Luther the inestimable advantage of seeking in the original languages the real meaning of the sacred writers. The commentaries of this period of his life are not polemical, but popular and practical. His one object was to give *life* to the words of Scripture, and to bring them home to the hearts and consciences of men. His *Operationes in Psalmos*, which has been called "the first scientifically exegetic book of the Reformation," belongs to this period.

iv. In his fourth and last stage he gained a clear grasp over the principles which continued to predominate for three centuries in the Exegesis of the Reformation. These principles I will, with all brevity, endeavour to explain.

1. First among them is the *supreme and final Authority of Scripture, apart from all merely ecclesiastical authority*. This position Luther asserted as a *Haupt-fundament*. He never paused to demonstrate it; he refused even to discuss

<sup>1</sup> *Briefe*, ed. De Wette, vol. i. p. 116.

it; and for a sufficient reason. As far as words went it was theoretically accepted by his opponents. Luther and the Romanists alike said, "Scripture is the ultimate witness and authority"; but there was this essential difference between them:—the Romanists combined Scripture with its interpretation as accepted by the mediæval Church; Luther entirely rejected the supremacy of that system of interpretation, and regarded it as being in many instances demonstrably erroneous. Nay, he went farther, for in later years he openly and frequently derided both the principles on which Papal Exegesis was founded and the results to which it led. It was in his controversy with Eck at Leipzig in 1519, that he was first led to the distinct rejection of the authority of Councils, which he said had demonstrably erred and had contradicted each other. In the days of Arius, he argued, the majority of the bishops had been Arians. "When Papists quote the Scriptures," he scornfully observed, "it is in this style: '*Ye are the salt of the earth,*' i.e. '*Ye are priests.*' '*Praise God in his saints,*' i.e. '*The Pope has the power to confer canonization.*'" "We should trust a layman who has Scripture with him," he said, "more than Pope or Council without it." "The Church is the creature of the Gospel, incomparably inferior to the Gospel." "The censure of the Church will not separate me from the Church, if truth joins me to the Church." "The Church cannot create articles of faith, she can only recognize and confess them, as a slave does the seal of his lord."<sup>1</sup> "The Pythagorism, '*Ipse dixit,*' is not to be tolerated in the Church."<sup>2</sup> "Let each of us see that we so read, write, teach, learn, that after having studied our Bibles, we do not heap up to ourselves Fathers, Councils, Doctors, Decretals, and the slough of human

<sup>1</sup> See Fabricius, *Loci Communes Martini Lutheri*, i. 120. Kœstlin, *Luther's Theologie*, i. 275ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, i.

traditions and opinions.”<sup>1</sup> Thus Luther refused to allow the Pope—as he, in his rough way, expressed it—“to sit on all the eggs.”

2. Luther not only asserted the authority of Scripture but of *Scripture only* [sufficiencia Scripturæ]. He anticipated the formula of Chillingworth that “the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants.”<sup>2</sup> He declined to be refuted by any patristic comments. “I ask for Scripture,” he said, “and Eck offers the Fathers. I ask for the sun; he shews me his lanterns. I ask ‘where is your Scripture proof?’; and he adduces Ambrose and Cyril!” The Romish Church, like the Jewish, regards tradition as the sole authoritative interpreter of Scripture; and Luther set aside this claim.

In his Comment on the Psalms (1521)<sup>3</sup> he lays down two rules by which to judge of the Fathers. One is that they have often erred; from which he draws the unanswerable inference that their bare *opinions* can have no value apart from such proofs as they can offer. The other, no less unanswerable, is that the Fathers not only never claim, but expressly *repudiate*, all title to be regarded as infallible authorities. “The Papists wrong the dear Fathers,” he said, “in attributing to them an authority which they disclaimed. They honour not the Fathers, but their own tyranny. They want to sit on the eggs, and be our idol.”<sup>4</sup>

Respecting individual Fathers he expresses himself with

<sup>1</sup> *Id.*, i. 69. Luther formally rejected the rule of Vincentius Lerinensis, that, “*Interpretationis linea secundum ecclesiastici et catholici sensus normam dirigatur*” (*Commonitor*. Ep. 2), which was reaffirmed by the Council of Trent. See Köstlin, *Luther's Theologie*, i. 272-278.

<sup>2</sup> “Non aliunde quam ex ipsâ sacrâ Scripturâ certa et infallibilis potest haberi interpretatio.” Quenstädt, i. 137.

<sup>3</sup> On Ps. xxxvii.

<sup>4</sup> The Council of Trent (Sess. iv.) forbade any one to interpret “*Contra eum sensum quem tenuit et tenet sancta mater Ecclesia aut etiam contra unanimum consensum Patrum.*” There is however, exegetically speaking, no such thing as an *unanimis consensus Patrum*.

the most independent freedom. For Augustine he had the deepest respect, but from Origen he was repelled by his allegories (*die denn nicht eines Dreck's werth sind*), and from Jerome by his ecclesiasticism. He considered that he had wasted time over Cyprian and Gregory, and thought that Melancthon was worth a score of Cyprians and Firmilians. "*Salvis reverentiis Patrum*," he said in his Dispute at Leipzig, "*praefero ego auctoritatem Scripturae*."

Of the Schoolmen he speaks (as we have seen in previous papers) still more contemptuously. He complains that those scholars who have "filled their bellies with the husks of swine (*i.e.* of philosophers)" have given rise to the proverb, "*Scriptura habet cereum nasum*."<sup>1</sup>

3. *He rejected Allegory as a source of dogma* even more decisively than his predecessors, and insisted still more strongly on *the supreme importance of the literal sense*. Here are some of his own statements:—

"The literal sense of Scripture alone is the whole essence of faith and of Christian theology."

"I have observed this, that all heresies and errors have originated, not from the simple words of Scripture as is so universally asserted, but from *neglecting* the simple words of Scripture, and from the affectation of subjective (*proprio cerebro*) tropes and inferences."

"An interpreter must, as much as possible, avoid allegory that he may not wander in idle dreams." "Allegories must be used as mere pictures and ornaments."<sup>2</sup> "Each passage has one clear, definite, and true sense of its own. All others are but doubtful and uncertain opinions." "Allegories are empty speculations, and as it were the scum of Holy Scripture." "Allegory is useless for proof." "Allegory is a sort of beautiful harlot who proves herself

<sup>1</sup> *Fabricius*, l. c. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Just as St. Paul introduces the allegory of Sarah and Hagar *after* preaching Justification by Faith, "So kannst Du heimliche Deutung mit einführen neben dem öffentlichen Text, den schmucken und als schöne Spangen darzu heften."

to be specially seductive to idle men.”<sup>1</sup> “To allegorise is,” he says, “*mit der Schrift gauckeln*.” Allegorising may degenerate into a mere monkey-game (*Affenspiel*). Allegories are, in his own energetic words, “*ungeschikte, unge-reimte, erdichtete, altvettelische, lose Zoten*.”

Like almost all writers of this age his practice is inferior to his theory, but the only reason why he did not reject the allegorical method altogether was the occasional though rare use of it by St. Paul. Luther did however decisively reject the *fourfold sense*. “In the Schools of Theologians,” he says, “it is a well-known rule that Scripture is to be understood in four ways—literal, allegoric, moral, anagogic. . . . But if we wish to handle Scripture aright, our one effort will be to attain “*Unum, simplicem, germanum, et certum sensum literalem*.”<sup>2</sup>

He was led to these conclusions by seeing that there was no glimmer of any genuine exegetical principle in the mediæval commentaries, and that allegory had been abused into a subtle method for transferring to the Church the authority which belonged exclusively to the Scriptures. Such a method destroyed all certainty of interpretation, and left room for the most extravagant perversions. It undermined the inherent value of the sacred records to such an extent as to lead to the foolish remark of even Erasmus, that without allegorising one might as well read Livy as the Book of Judges.<sup>3</sup> Unhappily, however, Luther opened a postern-door for the re-intrusion of artificial dogmatic combinations when he said that “Grammar must not rule facts, but yield to facts.”<sup>4</sup> It is strange that so many centuries

<sup>1</sup> These remarks are chiefly taken from Luther's *Commentary on Genesis*. *Fabric.*, l. c., vol. i. pp. 72 ff.

<sup>2</sup> On Genesis xv. The “*quadruplex intelligentia*” (words, context, purpose, doctrine, of Flacius, *Clavis S.S.*, p. 68) is far more sensible.

<sup>3</sup> *Enchirid. Mil. Christiani*.

<sup>4</sup> On Genesis xvi. and see Preface to the Canticles. It is especially in his Comments on Job, Psalms, Revelation, and Solomon's Song that Luther is least faithful to his own principles.



of exegetes have failed to master the simple principle that their one duty was to ascertain, apart from all fancies or prepossessions, what was really said and really meant by the sacred writers at the time when they wrote.

4. The rejection of allegoric fancies and traditional methods led to the famous dogma of *the Perspicuity of Scripture*.<sup>1</sup> In his views upon this subject he sometimes almost anticipated the modern thesis that "the Bible is to be interpreted like any other book." He even wishes that there were no such things as commentaries, which Melancthon also said ought to be avoided like a pestilence.

"The Holy Ghost," says Luther, "is the all-simplest writer that is in heaven or earth; therefore his words can have no more than one simplest sense, which we call the scriptural or literal meaning."<sup>2</sup>

"The Word of God," says Melancthon, with strange tautology, "is not obscure and doubtful, because it is a law perspicuous and clear." He was confronted with the answer that there was not a verse in Scripture which could not be interpreted in different ways, but he contents himself with calling it a specimen of "mere petulance and diabolical sophistry." He does, however, add the limitation that "*in the chief matters which pertain to the Law and the Gospel*" (*perspicuitas finalis*) "the Scripture is open and without obscurity," and attributes contests and disputes to the malice and pravity of those who corrupt Scripture.

5. With such views Luther, as a natural consequence, held *the right of private judgment*.

This view lies at the base of all Protestantism; we might

<sup>1</sup> *Werke*, xviii. 14, 16. Of course he did not mean to assert that Scripture does not contain difficulties. He is fond of quoting St. Gregory's phrase "*Fluvius est in quo agnus peditat et elephas natat*." The "perspicuity" of Scripture was supposed to be conditioned by right use of means, which included the aid of the Holy Ghost; and a distinction was drawn between "outward" and "inward" clearness.

<sup>2</sup> Answer to Emser (*Werke*, xviii., ed. Walch, 1602).

even say that it lies at the base of all independent and thoughtful religion. Man has no right to abrogate the reason with which he has been endowed by God; and the Christian has no right to abrogate the exercise of that spiritual faculty—the result of that unction from the Holy One, which is promised not only to priests, but to all faithful Christians alike—by which he is enabled to know all necessary truth. No doubt the Reformers were instantly liable to be perplexed by the fact that the exercise of the individual judgment led men into the extremest diversities. In the sacramentarian controversy Zwingli, in the political controversies the Anabaptists, in many other bitter and deadly controversies, Calvin, and Campanus, and Emser, and Servetus, and Socinus appealed equally to Scripture and claimed the right to interpret it in their own way. The difficulty was a terrible one because tolerance was as yet unknown. The doctrine of toleration unhappily owes more even to the Socini than to the Great Reformer. Melancthon proposed to get over the difficulty by talking of a “*consensus of pious men*,” which was only restoring in another form the futile notion of the infallibility of councils.<sup>1</sup> Calvin, with his usual boldness, denied the right of private judgment altogether; he said that the best remedy for disputed dogmas was “*verorum episcoporum synodus*.”<sup>2</sup> Luther stoutly held fast to it. He preferred the hurricane of controversies to the pestilence of universal error and the stagnancy of enforced uniformity. He asks Henry VIII. “who could be certain in his own conscience that the Pope interpreted Scripture rightly?”<sup>3</sup> What then was the worth of the nominal unity—the torpor of meaningless and unreasoning acquiescence—which reigned in Roman

<sup>1</sup> “*Interpretatio est donum piorum*.” Melancthon, *Loci Communes*, p. 369. On the other hand even in 1520 Luther wrote to the Pope “*Leges interpretandi verbum Dei non patior*.”

<sup>2</sup> Calvin, *Instit.*, iv. c. 9, § 13.

<sup>3</sup> See Köstlin, *Luther's Theologie*, vol. ii. p. 63.

Catholicism? Whatever evils might seem to spring from the exercise of private judgment, Luther continued to maintain that since Scripture is common to all, it is the duty of each separate Christian to ground his faith upon it, and to test his faith by it. "To ascertain and judge about doctrine pertains to all and to every Christian, and in such a way that let him be anathema who injures their right by a single hair."<sup>1</sup>

6. There were, however, certain definite rules which he laid down respecting the right interpretation of Scripture. In his Preface to Isaiah (1528), and in other parts of his writings, he says that three things are necessary to its comprehension.

i. *Grammar*. He admits that his own knowledge in this matter is imperfect, but quite justly claims that at least he knew as much as St. Augustine and other great recognized teachers. The importance of demanding a knowledge of grammar is shewn by the complaint of Bellarmine that "the better a grammarian a man was the worse theologian was he considered to be."<sup>2</sup>

ii. *History*, i.e. the times, circumstances, and conditions under which the words of Scripture were written (*Distingue tempora et concordabis Scripturas*).

iii. "The proportion of faith." Elsewhere he insists on the further essentials of—

iv. Faith and spiritual illumination.

v. Observance of the context.

vi. The reference of all Scripture to Christ.

The last four points require a word of elucidation.

7. "*The Proportion of Faith*" is a phrase which recurs again and again in all the post-Reformation discussions

<sup>1</sup> *Werke*, vol. xxxviii. p. 339. (Erl. Ausg.). He grounded this right on Matt. vii. 15; John x. 4, 5; 1 John iv. 1; 1 Thess. v. 21; 1 Cor. ii. 15 (regarding every Christian as "spiritual"); 1 Cor. iii. 22 (i.e. you have the right of judging, *de omnium dictis et factis*).

<sup>2</sup> Bellarm., *De Rom. Pontif.*, iv. 12.

about Scriptural exposition. As is the case with so large a number of current dogmatic shibboleths, the phrase is used in a sense wholly apart from its original meaning. When St. Paul said if we have the gift of "prophecy," *i.e.* of religious teaching, each man should exercise it *κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως*, he meant "according to the proportion of *our* faith" as the Revised Version rightly renders it, *i.e.* in accordance with the smaller or larger measure of faith which each man has himself received. This phrase was however understood to mean that all Scripture must be interpreted with reference to all other Scripture, which was practically a reappearance of the old Romish rule that nothing was to be explained in any other sense than that of the current Church dogmas. So far as the rule meant that no words or expressions were to be completely isolated, or exaggerated into meanings contrary to the general teaching with which they are connected, this misapplied phrase is susceptible of a true meaning; but it unhappily paved the way to the distortion and sophistry of that later Protestant Scholasticism which viewed every word of Scripture in the light of the standards and confessions of doctrine. Such a method makes of the Old Testament a sort of obscure forest in which "Dogma and Allegory hunt in couples to catch what they can." It was the abuse of this rule about the "Analogy of Faith" which caused the shipwreck of Protestant exegesis in the next generation.

8. Nothing can be wiser than Luther's remark on the *observance of the context*. "To cull diverse passages from diverse places without any reference to sequence of thought and comparison is," he says, "no happy mode of understanding and interpreting the Holy Scriptures. Nay more, it is the most current cause for going wrong." In the following sentence he is thinking more of the so-called "proportion of faith." "The theologian," he says, "unless

he wishes to err, must place all Scripture before his eyes, and compare contraries, and like the two cherubim which confronted each other, he must find unanimity in the midst of the mercy-seat; otherwise the countenance of each cherub will divert the eye which follows it far from the mercy-seat, that is from the true understanding of Christ."

9. Luther's main principle in studying the Old Testament was to find Christ everywhere. "*Tolle Christum. e Scripturis quid amplius in illis invenies?*" "The end of the Law," says Flacius, "is Christ; He alone is the pearl we must find."<sup>1</sup>

Here are some of his maxims:

"If our opponents urge Scripture against Christ, we urge Christ against Scripture."

"Scripture must be referred to Christ or cannot be held as true Scripture." "Keep the commandments" should be interpreted to mean "Keep them in Christ, or in the faith of Christ." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," *i.e.* in Christ and his faith. "Do this and thou shalt live," *i.e.* do it in Me, or thou wilt not do it, or wilt do the reverse. "Redeem thy sins by alms,"<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* in the faith of Christ, "otherwise thy alms will be a sin."<sup>3</sup>

Here again there is a truth which is indistinctly stated and may lead to great confusion. Homiletically it is perfectly correct; but exegetically this reading of Christian dogmatics between the lines of Jewish writings may only become (as it did become) another phase of unreality and scholasticism. It may be morally permissible, but it can only be historically false and misleading, to give to Genesis the meaning of the Apocalypse, and to the Canticles that of the first Epistle of St. John. It caused the radical defect of Luther's exegesis—its perpetual tendency to dogma

<sup>1</sup> Flacius, *Clavis S.S.*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> "Redime peccata tua elemosynis," Dan. iv. 26. A.V. "Break off thy sins by righteousness."

<sup>3</sup> "Wir erleuchten die alte heilige Schrift durch das Evangelium." *Werke*, iv. 1728.

and controversy in treating of passages where the dogma is only subjective and arbitrary, and the polemic has no fair excuse. A commentary on the Old Testament is not a reasonable place for incessant attacks on monkery, or arguments in favour of Justification by Faith. When Luther reads the Trinity and the Incarnation in passages written a thousand years before the Christian era, and—in a spirit worthy of Rabbi Akhiva himself—infers the Divinity of the Messiah, and even the *communicatio idiomatum* from the participle *ἦν* in Gen. iv. 1, we see that his conceptions of the due treatment of the Old Testament differ seriously from ours. Luther finds traces of the Trinity in Gen. i. 26, iii. 21, xi. 7–9; Num. vi. 22; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, etc.; and Immortality in Gen. ii. 7. Like Augustine he will admit any interpretation “*modo pia sit*.” He deliberately adopts the principles which a thousand years earlier had, with deeper insight and more candid wisdom, been deliberately rejected by Theodore of Mopsuestia and the School of Antioch. He here fails to follow the rule of Hilary, which he praises: “Optimus interpret hic est qui sensum e Scriptura potius retulerit quam attulerit, nec cogat hoc in doctum contentum videre, quod ante intelligentiam docere præsumerit.”<sup>1</sup> It must then be admitted that Luther in his comment upon Genesis adds little or nothing to Nicolas de Lyra except the dogmatic treatment of patriarchal history.<sup>2</sup>

10. We may remark that the bold attitude of Luther towards certain parts of Scripture—such as the Epistles of St. Jude and St. James, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Revelation of St. John—and generally speaking that *manly independence*<sup>3</sup> which has led to the stigma that

<sup>1</sup> *Fabricius*, l. c. i. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Siegfried, über Raschi's Einfluss auf Lira und Luther. Merz, *Archiv.*, vol. i. p. 432. To the last Luther disliked Lyra's use of Jewish interpreters.

<sup>3</sup> See his Prefaces to the Epistles of James and Jude, and 1 Peter. In the former he says, “Was Christum nicht lehret das ist noch nicht apostolisch wenn es gleich St. Petrus oder St. Paulus lehrete.” The very interesting passages are

he is the founder of modern rationalism,<sup>1</sup> arose from his conviction of the truth of this exegetic principle. It led with perfect honesty, to the very results which are most distasteful to those who have most warmly adopted it. He held it a matter of no importance whether Moses had written the Pentateuch or not. He has little to say of Esther. He says that Ezra "*estherissat et mordochissat*." If Scripture be of little or no value except so far as it bears on one special doctrine, Luther's free expression of indifference towards certain parts of Scripture which did not honestly admit of such application became a logical necessity. When controversialists urged the Epistle of St. James against the doctrine of Justification by Faith, he told them that it was their way "to quote some single text and then set *their horns against all Scripture*." His views were more or less shared by the Magdeburg Centuriators, Melancthon, and even Caietan. He failed indeed to realize the complexity, the fragmentariness, the multiformity of Scripture as a whole, but we must set it down as one of his highest merits, that on *his* estimate of what the Canon ought to be, "he sought for the Canon in the Canon," and was not carried away by the "subjective idolism" and slavish superstition which treats all parts of Scripture as though they were of equal importance and were in every word and letter written by the finger of God. He shewed his courage and insight and his superiority to the popular ideas of his day by giving to the phrase "the

collected in Reuss, *Heilige Schriften*, N. T., vol. iv. p. 65. Luther's prefaces are collected by Walch in the fourteenth volume. Luther recognised the subjectivity of his views, and did not wish to force them on others. See *Tischreden* (Erl. Aug. vol. lxii. p. 128, vol. lxiii. p. 85).

<sup>1</sup> The first to make this charge was Krause, *Opusc.*, p. 199. Keim, *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. i. p. 142 (E. T.), calls Luther "the most radical critic of the free Church of the Reformation." Luther puts James, Jude, Hebrews, and Revelation at the end of his Bible, and does not even number them. He says of the Revelation, "Mein Geist kann sich in das Buch nicht schicken, und ist mir die Ursach genug dass ich sein nicht hoch achte das Christus drinnen weder gelehrt noch erkannt wird."

Word of God" a deeper and wider meaning than that which, in a manner wholly unscriptural, *identifies it* with Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

11. Nothing can be more true than Luther's demand for *faith* as a means for the *saving* knowledge of Scripture. Without spiritual insight it is certain that no man can rightly apprehend some of its deepest lessons. Luther felt that he had himself been taught by struggle and tribulation. "The happy and fortunate," he says, "read the Scriptures as though they were some songs of Ovid."<sup>2</sup> Yet here, too, there is room for abuse. The decision of what an author says and means appertains throughout by far the largest part of the sacred writings to grammar, intelligence, candour, historical knowledge, literary tact and training, far more than to piety. Without these the holiest readers have erred in matters of interpretation. The maxim, "*Grammaticam decet Theologiae cedere,*" may lead to casuistry and perversion, and the remark, "*Nullus homo unum iota in Scripturis videt nisi qui Spiritum Dei habet,*" applies only to the need of spiritual discernment for a *saving apprehension* of Divine truths. Neither holiness nor orthodoxy can decide upon questions of translation, and it is nothing less than spiritual arrogance and usurpation which has led priests and sects to claim, on the supposed possession of "an inward light," an infallible authority to decide on such questions as the meaning of sentences and the canonicity of books.

12. Of these great principles, then, some are invaluable; others, as we have seen, are liable to grave abuse unless their limitations are more carefully stated than has been

<sup>1</sup> According to Diestel, *Gesch. d. Alt. Test.*, 288, this *identification* of the Bible with the Word of God is due to G. Major *De origine Verbi Dei*: 1550. See Heppe, *Alt-protest. Dogmatik*, i. 251.

<sup>2</sup> In Gen. xxi. To the "gift of prophecy," and "our own study," he adds "temptations inward and outward," as tending to explain the sense of St. Paul and of all the Scriptures.



done by Luther. But apart from these, he occasionally states other valuable rules—such as the importance of observing antitheses, the frequency of anticipation and recapitulation, the notice of the figure *ὑστερον πρότερον*<sup>1</sup>—and his writings abound in those vivid illustrations and powerful flashes of insight which are often more useful than pages of dull dissertation. If we sum up his merits and deficiencies as an Expositor, we may say that (1) he failed to grasp, or rather to apply, the essential principle of the Progressiveness of Revelation; (2) that this imperfect recognition of historic development gave great haziness to his view of the relation between the Old and New Testaments;<sup>2</sup> and (3) that he sometimes turns from the straight path of interpretation to pick up the gilded apples of dogma. On the other hand his view of the supreme dignity of Scripture; his rejection of false traditional methods; his manly independence and originality; his bringing the struggles of daily life to bear on difficulties which arise from the inscrutableness of the human heart; his insistence on a full use of extraneous aids; his constant reference to the original languages; his realization of the literal sense; the boldness with which he judges Scripture itself by its own loftiest and richest elements—constitute an epoch in the advance which was for a time retarded as the breath of new life became more faint, but which is being carried to its best results by living scholars, and which, if we only trust to the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, and are not afraid of new truths, is yet destined to bring forth "fruits which are fruits of nepenthe, flowers which are flowers of amaranth."

F. W. FARRAR.

<sup>1</sup> In Gen. xxx. he borrows the rule from Aug., *De doctr. Christiana*, ii., who took it from Tichonius.

<sup>2</sup> To this perplexity about the Old Testament, and not to the want of courage or to the low moral standard with which he has been so basely charged, was due his fatal concession in the case of the bigamous marriage of Philip of Hesse.

## THE DAYS OF ENOS.

## GENESIS iv. 26.

No one can read the fourth chapter of Genesis carefully without being arrested by the statement in the twenty-sixth verse: "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: *then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.*" These last words are significant, *φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν*, as the Greeks would call them. The writer clearly attached some considerable importance to the fact which he has thus preserved, although what its precise meaning may be it is somewhat difficult to discover. To this question I propose to address myself in the present paper.

For the rendering of the English version there is much to be urged. Not only is it an easy and natural translation of the Hebrew words, but it has also large support from the ancient versions. The rendering of the Septuagint, *οὗτος ἤλπισεν ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ*, may be dismissed at once as incorrect, having arisen from a confusion of the verb *khalal* (לָלַל) with *yakhal* (יָחַל) "to hope." The Greek version of Aquila improves upon this by translating the clause, *τότε ἤρχθη τοῦ καλεῖν ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου*. To the same effect is that of Symmachus, *τότε ἀρχὴ ἐγένετο*. Thus both of these agree with the Authorized Version, which has, further, the support of the Syriac; while the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Latin of Jerome differ only in assigning a definite person to the verb, making it refer to Enos: "Iste cœpit invocare nomen Domini" (*Vulgate*). In spite however of this formidable array of authorities, I think that the rendering is not absolutely beyond question. One school of interpreters has for the most part withheld its consent, and that is one to which we should naturally attach great weight, viz.

the Jewish. The Targums and many Jewish Rabbis of later date agree in rejecting the ordinary rendering, and in supporting an alternative which will presently be offered to the reader's consideration. But, before passing on to this, a few words may be devoted to the discussion of the meaning of the phrase, "to call upon the name of the Lord." It is not one of common occurrence. We meet with it next in the history of Abraham, where it stands in the following passages: (Gen. xii. 8) "There he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord"; (xiii. 4) "The place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord"; (xxi. 33) "And Abraham planted a grove [rather, *a tamarisk*] in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God." Once it is used of Isaac: (Chap. xxvi. 25) "And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord." Beyond these passages it is not found in the Pentateuch; and in the later books, in the few passages in which it occurs, it has lost that technical and definite meaning which belongs to it in the history of the Patriarchs (See 1 Kings xviii. 24; 2 Kings v. 11; Joel ii. 32; Zeph. iii. 9; Ps. cxvi. 4, 13, 17). In Genesis it is manifestly used of solemn and formal worship. In three out of the four instances cited from the Patriarchal history it stands in close connection with the mention of an altar. In the fourth it is connected with the planting of a tree, an act which from the manner in which it is narrated we should gather to have been a solemn and religious one.

Of this definite and formal worship of God the passage which we have been considering gives us (according to the ordinary interpretation) the origin and commencement. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.* "We have here," says Keil, "an account of the commencement of that worship of God which consists in prayer, praise,

and thanksgiving, or in the acknowledgment and celebration of the mercy and help of Jehovah. While the family of Cainites, by the erection of a city, and the invention and development of worldly arts and business, were laying the foundation for the kingdom of this world, the family of the Sethites began, by united invocation of the name of the God of grace, to found and to erect the kingdom of God." A difficulty, however, arises at once. At the beginning of this very chapter *sacrifice*, both bloody and unbloody, appears as an institution already existing. It is hard to imagine that it was unaccompanied by any invocation of the Supreme Being, with which in later instances it is so closely joined. How then can the commencement of this invocation of God be placed *later* than the origin of sacrifice? The difficulty is for the most part ignored and passed over in silence by commentators. And yet it is a very real one. The sacred writer would scarcely have recorded this fact in his very brief record unless it was really significant—unless it formed a new point of departure, which, if we take the words as they stand in our English Bibles, it certainly does not. At best it only recounts a further development of what must already have existed in some shape or other. It speaks rather of a continuance and an advance than of an absolute beginning—of a *turning point*, if you will, but not of a *commencement*.

We are led then by this consideration to hesitate before adopting the current explanation of the passage; and are induced at least to give a patient hearing to the alternative translation, which has the support of the great majority of Jewish expositors.<sup>1</sup> This is first found in the very ancient Targum of Onkelos (dating from the first or second century

<sup>1</sup> The view taken by the Dean of Canterbury is that "the name Jehovah had now become a title of the Deity, whereas previously no such sacredness had been attached to it" (*Old Testament Commentary for English Readers*, vol. i. p. 32). I cannot think that there is much to be said for this, although it has the merit of avoiding the difficulty mentioned above.

of the Christian era), in which the text is rendered : "Then was there *profanation* in calling upon the name of the Lord." In the later Targum of the *pseudo-Jonathan* (the seventh century ?) the statement is somewhat amplified : "That was the time when men began to err and make to themselves idols, and called their idols after the name of the Word of the Lord." This, it must be remembered, is intended not for a literal translation, but for a paraphrase bringing out the meaning of the text. The older Targum, however, gives the translation on which the paraphrase is based ; and, as far as the actual word is concerned, *hûchal* (הוּכַל), may equally well signify "it was profaned" as "it was begun." The particular voice of the verb here used (the Hophal) is found nowhere else in the Old Testament. The active (Hiphil) is used in several passages, and generally means "to begin." But in Ezekiel xxxix. 7 it certainly signifies "to profane" or "pollute." "I will make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel ; and *I will not let them pollute* (לֹא אִחַל) my holy name any more." We seem, therefore, to be warranted in rendering the passive "it was profaned" or "there was profanation."<sup>1</sup> And, if so, the text will describe the origin not of the true worship of God—that must already have existed—but of *idolatry*, which is essentially a "profanation in calling upon the name of the Lord." This view, it has already been implied, became the traditional one among Jewish expositors. We learn from Jerome's *Quæstiones in Genesin* that it was the favourite one with the Rabbis of the fourth century ; for after giving his own explanation of the passage (substantially that of the Authorized Version) he tells us that most of the Hebrews take a different view, and suppose

<sup>1</sup> I feel that there is some difficulty in the preposition לְ after הוּכַל with this interpretation. It is however lessened by a comparison of Jeremiah xxxiv. 8, 15, 17, xxxvi. 8, in which passages a not altogether dissimilar use of לְקַרָּא is found.

that then for the first time idols were fashioned in the name of the Lord, and in his likeness. Later Jewish writers, such as Kimchi and Rashi, carry on the tradition, which is elaborated in a striking manner by Maimonides, the great doctor of the synagogue in the twelfth century, "the glory of Israel, the second Moses." The passage is interesting and worth quoting, although it cannot be pretended that there is the slightest foundation in Holy Scripture for the details with which the bare outline of the sacred text is filled up. "In the days of Enos," he says, "the sons of Adam erred with a great error, and the counsel of the wise men of that age became brutish: and their error was this. They said, forasmuch as God hath created these stars and spheres to govern the world, and set them on high and imparted honour to them, and they are ministers that minister before Him; it is meet that men should laud and glorify and give them honour. For this is the will of God, that we might magnify and honour whomsoever He magnifieth and honoureth, even as a king would have them magnified that stand before him. When this thing was come up into their hearts, they began to build temples unto the stars, and to offer sacrifices unto them, and to laud and glorify them with words, and to worship before them, that they might, in their evil opinion, obtain favour of the Creator."

Whatever may be thought of this tradition, it is tolerably certain that the worship of the heavenly bodies was one of the earliest forms of idolatry. It is alluded to in the book of Job (Chap. xxxi. 26-28): "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above." Again we find mention of it in Deuteronomy iv. 19: "Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest

the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them." While Amos v. 25, 26 implies that the Israelites were actually guilty of star worship during their wanderings in the desert: "Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves." To a still earlier date would the practice be carried back if there were any historical foundation for the fine old Jewish legend concerning Abraham which found its way ultimately into the Koran. This must have been known to Josephus, for he tells us that the Patriarch was led to a belief in the one only God by observing the changes of the sun and moon and all the heavenly bodies. "For if," said he, "these bodies had power of their own, they would certainly take care of their own regular motions; but since they do not preserve such regularity, they make it plain that, so far as they co-operate to our advantage, they do it not of their own abilities, but as they are subservient to Him that commands them, to whom alone we ought justly to offer our honour and thanksgiving" (*Antiquities*, I. vii.).

As given in the Koran the story is very graphic: "When night overshadowed him he saw a star, and said, This is my Lord; but when it set he said, I like not gods which set. And when he saw the moon rising he said, This is my Lord; but when he saw it set he said, Verily if my Lord direct me not I shall become one of the people who go astray. And when he saw the sun rising he said, This is my Lord: this is the greatest; but when it set he said, O my people, verily I am clear of that which ye associate with God: I direct my face unto Him who hath created the heavens and the earth" (Sale's *Koran*, p. 95).

These illustrations cannot of course be made to furnish any argument for the rendering of Genesis iv. 26 which

became traditional among the Jews. They are only adduced here as helping to set before us vividly the character of the primitive idolatry, of which (according to this interpretation) the text gives us the origin. The translation must stand or fall on its own merits. It does not appear to me to be by any means certain, and yet I cannot think that we are justified in dismissing it in the contemptuous fashion which has become customary. The strong *consensus* of Jewish opinion is a weighty argument in its favour; and if it be allowed that it is linguistically possible, I think it will be felt that it is quite as probable as the one which is ordinarily adopted. The "profanation," it will be seen, is not attributed to Enos. The authors of it are not mentioned. We are only told that it took place *then*, viz. in the time of Enos. The words mark the date at which it was introduced, but do not in the least imply that it originated in the line of Seth. One is tempted, however, to think that there is a possible connection of some sort between the rise of idolatry and the name given to Seth's son. Enos (Hebrew עֲנוֹשׁ from עָנָה to be weak, frail), designates man from his frail and mortal condition. Keil's view is that this feeling led to God, and to that invocation of the name of Jehovah which commenced under Enos. This seems to me to be less likely than the old Rabbinical idea that Seth, seeing the beginning of apostasy from the true God, in sadness of heart at that which he witnessed gave to his son a name which should mark his sense of human weakness and human frailty. But we are now entirely in the region of conjecture. I have already said that I do not propose the translation as certain, only I do not feel that it deserves the treatment which it meets with in most modern commentaries. Many of the older divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as those whose views may be found in Pole's *Synopsis Criticorum*, and in the *Critici Sacri*, were good Hebrew scholars and



well versed in Rabbinical lore; and they, for the most part, treated it with considerable respect: and with the words of one of them this paper may be fitly concluded: "Credibile est tunc primum certos ritus constitutos fuisse colendi Dominum. Siquidem invocandi verbo totus cultus designatur aliquando. Quid ergo mirum si idem hoc loco fiat. Nam tunc primum invocatum fuisse nomen Domini non est verisimile. Qui postremam opinionem quam ait Hieronymus esse plerorumque Ebræorum sequuntur, legunt Ebræa interpretantes *tunc pollutum fuit invocando nomen Domini*: quam interpretationem ut non sperno (verbum enim Ebræum ad utrumque ambiguum est) ita meliorem judico priorem: fruatur quisque judicio suo."<sup>1</sup>

EDGAR C. S. GIBSON.

#### NOTE ON EPHESIANS III, 3, 4.

καθὼς προέγραψα ἐν ὀλίγῳ, πρὸς δὲ δύνασθε ἀναγινώσκοντες νοῆσαι τὴν σύνεσίν μου ἐν τῇ μυστηρίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

"As I wrote afore in few words (marg. or, a little before), whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." (*Authorized Version.*)

"As I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ." (*Revised Version.*)

In both these versions the words πρὸς δὲ are rendered "whereby;" which is a very unusual meaning to be given to the preposition πρὸς. Surely it ought to have the sense of *whereunto*, which may here be taken to be equivalent to *so far as*.

Again, the Revisers seem to have felt that the words "ye may understand," are a very inadequate rendering of δύνασθε . . . νοῆσαι, especially as δύνασθε occupies so prominent and emphatic a position in the text, and stands in such close connection with ἀναγινώσκοντες immediately following it. But the Revised Version, though an improvement, also fails to give due emphasis to the

<sup>1</sup> Drusius in *Crit. Sacri*, vol i. p. 127.

words δύνασθε ἀναγινώσκοντες, nor is it easy to see why they should have been introduced at all.

I would, therefore, submit to the judgment of your readers the following version, as better expressing the Apostle's meaning:—

“As I wrote afore, briefly, so far as ye can by reading perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ.”

The Apostle gives as a reason for having written briefly of “the mystery,” that he had regard to the extent of *the ability of his readers* to perceive his understanding of it, *when expressed in writing*.

Thus, while the usual sense of the preposition πρὸς is retained, the force of the emphatic words δύνασθε ἀναγινώσκοντες is preserved, according to St. Paul's own order.

J. S. PURTON.

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### BRIEF NOTICES.

WE give a hearty welcome to THE ANDOVER REVIEW (Boston: Houghton and Co.), a new monthly magazine; the first number of which (January) has just reached us. It aims to do in America very much the same kind of work that has now been done for nearly ten years in England by THE EXPOSITOR. It is to be an exponent of liberal orthodoxy, both in exegesis and in apologetics. In its long list of contributors it includes most of the American clergy whose names are best known here, and there. And it makes a good start. The first number contains many admirable articles; and among them one by Dr. Parkhurst, on the parable of the Unjust Steward, which, while it brings out the true moral of that difficult parable, is written with so much originality and force and quaintness as to be well worth the price, thirty cents, asked for its whole contents. If it can but maintain itself at the level on which it has commenced, it is likely to find many friends on this side of the water as well as that.

LETTERS FROM A MYSTIC OF THE PRESENT DAY (London: Elliot Stock). This prettily printed and got up book is a collection of letters written by a Rector of the Church of England to his private friends “without any thought of publication.” His friends have done well to publish them, for they contain much food for medita-

tation, and many noble thoughts finely expressed. The note of mysticism is on them all, indeed; and now and then phrases and figures of speech—such as “seed,” “Spouse,” “Kingdom of Melchisedek”—are employed and repeated which lend themselves too easily to ridicule, or graze too closely on the edge of good taste. But this habit of fixing on certain metaphors, certain phrases, which, at least to the writer, have become charged with special significance, and using them as a kind of shorthand, is common in the mystical school; and in the present instance it is not carried to an extreme, while it is compensated by so clear an insight into the meaning of the Word, such mastery over the phases of inward experience, and a manner of thinking so generous and so devout, as at once to commend the book to every pious and sympathetic heart. No doubt there are many who will gladly place it among their most cherished aids to meditation and devotion.

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION; or the Ninety-five Theses and the Three Primary Works of Dr. Martin Luther translated into English. Edited by *Henry Wace, D.D.*, and *C. A. Buchheim, Ph.D.* (London: John Murray). This valuable work has a belated look about it, as though it had been intended for the recent Luther celebration. But if it were meant for that occasion, it is by no means dependent upon it. It is of great permanent worth, and is good for all times. It includes, besides the historic Theses concerning Indulgences, the three works of Luther which are known in Germany as “The Three Great Reformation Treatises”—viz. the treatise on Christian Liberty, the Address to the German Nobility, and the treatise on the Babylonish Captivity of the Church. Only the first of these has been previously translated into English. It is hardly too much to say that he who will study the contents of this book carefully will gather from it a better conception of Luther himself, and of the causes which led to the Reformation, the spirit by which it was animated, and the principles on which it was based, than by reading any number of books written about that great revolution in the religious thought and life of Europe. The introductions prefixed to these treatises, (1) On the Primary Principles of Luther's Life and Teaching, by Dr. Wace, and (2) On the Political Course of the Reformation in Germany, by Prof. Buchheim, are simply admirable, and at once place the student in the right attitude for reading Luther's strong brave words to profit.

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JONAH. By *R. A. Retford, M.A., LL.B.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton). Mr. Retford deals with this difficult Scripture in a sober and learned spirit. He holds the orthodox, which to us seems the only reasonable, view of the miracles it affirms, and gives good reasons for holding it. And he illustrates all that is otherwise obscure or perplexing in the book, from a wide range of reading. He does not call his work a commentary; but it is all that, and something more. Nothing that interests or puzzles the student is left untouched; while many dissertations are thrown in which serve to bring out either the historical setting or the ethical significance of this prophetic narrative. If his style were more vivacious, and his thoughtfulness were "touched with emotion," his work would be all that could be desired. As it is, any student of Jonah unversed in ancient tongues, and to whom therefore more learned expositions are inaccessible, will find himself sufficiently furnished for his task if he have these "Studies" at hand, and the little commentary contributed by Archdeacon Perowne to the Cambridge Bible for Schools.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH. By *Alfred Edersheim, D.D., Ph.D.* (London: Longmans). Dr. Edersheim is not likely to prove a formidable rival either to Dr. Geikie or to Canon Farrar in vivacity of style, or in insight into the meaning of the things which Jesus said and did; but whatever aid can be gained from the study of Rabbinical writings and a knowledge of Jewish habits of thought and modes of life, are here offered with an unrivalled abundance. Like all who have ventured on his great theme, he deals too much with the outward elements by which our Lord's earthly life was conditioned; but he approaches them, if not from a new point of view, at least with an ampler erudition, a more exact and comprehensive knowledge of all the elements of Jewish and Oriental existence, teaching, policy, worship, than most of his predecessors. He has, therefore, produced an invaluable book of reference for the student, rather than a work likely to achieve a wide popular acceptance.

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## THE ATTITUDE OF CHRISTIANS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.<sup>1</sup>

To make anything of so large a subject as this, in the very brief compass of such a paper as I have been asked to read, it will be convenient to start from some well known and widely accepted statement on the subject which will suggest the chief points for discussion.

Such a statement is given in the seventh of the xxxix. Articles, the doctrine of which is common to all the great Reformed Churches, and would be accepted, with slight modifications, by Lutherans. The chief points are:—

1. *The Old Testament is not contrary to the New.* This proposition is directed against ancient and modern Gnosticism. It is certainly implied in the statement of Jesus, that He came not to destroy, but to fulfil or fill up. In its negative form it is, therefore, quite unimpeachable by all who accept Christianity as an historical religion, and accept the faith of Jesus as their own faith. To turn it into a positive statement is not so easy; and it is when we turn to the positive statements of the Article that we begin to find matter about which Christians are not agreed.

2. And here the positive statement begins. *Both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for a temporary promise.* This doctrine too, was, up to the time

<sup>1</sup> This paper was prepared and read to introduce a friendly discussion at a Conference representing very various types of Christian thought.

when the Article was composed, practically agreed upon in all the Christian Churches. It corresponds with the old saying, *Novum Testamentum in vetere latet Vetus Testamentum in Novo patet*. But it is not easy for modern thinkers either to agree with or to differ from it, without qualifications. Taken as it stands, it is open to one obvious and grave objection. It appears to assume that in the Old Testament religion, as well as in the New, the subject of religion is the individual soul. The Old Testament, it is assumed, would be contrary to the New unless the hope of the individual believer were the same in both. But, as matter of fact, the subject of Religion in the Old Testament is not the individual but Israel, as a corporate unity. The promises of the Old Testament are primarily addressed to Israel, not to the individual soul. Throughout the larger part of the Old Testament religion offers felicity to the individual only in the felicity of a nation accepted with God. I do not say that the individual element is absent even in the older parts of the Old Testament. But it is altogether subordinate to the national aspect of religion. The Psalmists sometimes attain the persuasion, which the Book of Job strives after without reaching a satisfactory conclusion, that in the love of God the happiness of the individual is secured; but this is a transcendental conviction which is nowhere reduced to a regular part of the Old Testament system. The statement of the Article and of Protestant theology generally on this head is, in fact, a polemical statement. Its gist lies mainly in the negative. It is denied as against certain so-called Judaizers that "the Fathers looked only for a temporary promise." That is certainly true, if temporary promise means, as in the Article it plainly does mean, a promise of temporal (as distinct from everlasting) life and felicity to the individual believer. The Old Testament does not promise this. It teaches the individual to place his hope in the mercy of God

to Israel, which is an eternal not a temporary thing. This hope was enough, as we see in the case of Isaiah, to enable the believer to rejoice in tribulation, to maintain his confidence and faith in God amidst the most crushing national calamities. But the Old Testament did not give, like the New, a complete solution of the mystery of present affliction to the individual as part of his training for eternal life. If we say that the hope of the individual in the Old Testament went beyond his own life, and in so far was transcendental, we shall not be wrong. Nay, we may go farther and say that the Old Testament hope was directed in such a way that it would have been a vain hope had God not been preparing the New Testament hope to follow it. But this is not the same thing as to say that to the individual the hope of Old and New Testament were the same.

What, then, shall we say to the further position that the Old Testament hope was a hope in Christ? Here, again, if the proposition means, as its authors no doubt intended it to mean, a conscious hope in Christ, modern study of the Old Testament forbids us to assent. To find Christ in the Old Testament the old theology has to introduce the system of allegory, or at least a theory of types and symbols. But the symbolic meanings postulated for the ceremonies and words of the Old Testament are not proved from the Old Testament itself, but read into it from the New. This is not fair exegesis. It is absurd to assume that, side by side with the written Word there ran through the Old Dispensation an unwritten system of interpretation which made that Word mean something different from what lies on its surface.

In fact, if we look at the thing carefully, we shall see that the claim of continuity with the Old Testament revelation which New Testament Christianity makes for itself has a different formula from that of the Article. We

must remember that the New Testament belongs to an age in which people did not trouble themselves about exact historical exegesis. When the New Testament affirms that the prophets spoke of Christ they refer to the application which these words naturally suggested, not to their Old Testament hearers, but to Christian readers. The point, therefore, is not that the Old Testament writers promised salvation in Christ, but that they promised—no matter in what form—a salvation which is only realized in Christ. In this, as in other respects, the coming of Christ not only fulfils but fills up the prophetic outline. The prophets conceived the salvation of Israel under the only form which lay within their historical horizon, *i.e.* in *national* form. But what gave the form value to them was that, under the form, they pictured to themselves the forgiveness of sin, the moral reconciliation of man with God, the realization of his gracious Kingship. Christianity offers the same blessings in Christ, but in a very different form. It therefore, fulfils the essence of the Old Testament promise, and in this sense the Article is right; but it has not hit the right expression of the truth aimed at.

3. But the Old Testament notoriously contains not only prophetic promise, but an elaborate system of law. The third proposition of the Article, *Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the Commandments which are called Moral*, refers to this; and, according to the usual Protestant formula, divides law into Ritual, Civil, and Moral. The Rites and Ceremonies do not bind Christian men; the Civil precepts are not necessary to be accepted in a Christian commonwealth; the Moral commands are still binding. There is an air of precision about this statement which has given it great vogue, but it really



covers rather than answers one of the most difficult questions in the relation of Christians to the Old Testament.

Taken together with the previous statement, it implies that the Old Testament may be divided, as Paul divides it, into Law and Promise; and it is also implied, again with Paul, that it was in the Promise, not in the Law, that the vital force of the dispensation lay. Thus far modern enquiry agrees with the Protestant formula, and even places it in a new and striking light. Paul, arguing from that construction of the Old Testament history which was accepted in his own day, and of course raising no question of historical criticism, teaches that the Promise of salvation is older than the law of works, and always contained the vital element apprehended by the Old Testament faith. Modern research has shewn that, as a matter of fact, the Law is a much more modern thing than the Jews themselves in the time of Christ supposed; and enables us to assign more precisely its place in that Divine plan of which, according to the teaching of our Lord and his disciples, the Old and New Testament revelations are continuous parts.

The Old Testament represents this plan as seeking the realization of the Kingship of Jehovah in Israel. Jesus accepts this ideal in his gospel of the kingdom of heaven, *i.e.* the Kingdom of God; but He accepts it with a difference which it is necessary to understand.

The nation of Israel in the time before the great Assyrian troubles did live under a present sense of the Kingship of Jehovah. That Kingship was expressed not in a code, but in living institutions in which actual exercise of Jehovah's executive and judicial Kingship was realized. Jehovah went forth with the host of Israel. His Spirit gave wisdom to their kings. His oracle gave sentence at the sanctuary. He received their gifts at the altar and answered them with blessing. This simple faith was broken down when the whole order of ancient Israel was crushed in the

disastrous advance of the Assyrian empire to the Mediterranean sea-board. The prophets alone were able to see that the subjugation of Israel by the servants of a strange god was no less a proof of the present Kingship of Jehovah than the nation's earlier felicity had been. Jehovah was now manifesting Himself as the righteous judge, punishing sin, yet reserving a remnant of grace, that his kingdom might not vanish for ever, but might still be preserved for an ideal consummation in the future. This Theodicea received its most striking confirmation in the return from exile. But the history of the restored Jerusalem was such as to shake faith once more. The state of slavery continued. Disasters and sufferings followed in unbroken succession. According to theory, these disasters were due to sin. But it was difficult to accept this theory as sufficient. For the righteous suffered with the wicked; nay, it was sometimes possible for the perplexed nation to complain that they suffered not for their sins but actually because they clave to Jehovah: "For his sake they were killed all day." Various solutions of these difficulties were sought, and can still be read in the Book of Job and in certain Psalms. But the solution which may be called *official*, was that embodied in practical form in the work of Ezra and, his successors, the Scribes. It held that national obedience, if perfect, must be accompanied by the manifestation of the kingdom of Jehovah. It was, therefore, above all things, necessary to systematize the whole duty of the Israelite; duties moral, social and ceremonial, were all codified in the Torah or deduced from it by the interpretations of the Scribes. The business of Israel was to set fast the Torah, and, when this was effected, the deliverance would come. But with the establishment of the Torah, the living prophetic word of Jehovah ceased. There was now no practical sense in which God's kingship in Israel was a present kingship. He had

left his Law, but He was not present to execute it. The kingdom of God, which was still a present reality to the prophets became to the Scribes an ideal of the future. Under the Hasmoneans the gloom of the present had been for a moment dispelled, and an effective presence of God in Israel seemed about to be realized; but these hopes failed, and in the time of Christ the kingdom of God seemed farther off than ever.

Jesus in his doctrine of the kingdom returns above all to the faith of the prophets, that the kingdom of God is not a thing lying in the far future, but an object of present faith. His doctrine of the fatherly providence of God, which forbids the believer to take thought of the morrow, implies that happiness in God and his sovereignty is a present possession. The sum of all the good things of the kingdom lies in the forgiveness of sins, which can be realized *now*. Thus the kingdom becomes a spiritual thing which those who have the Spirit of Christ can realize as a present good. The *peace* of God is a peace that keeps, not the land of Israel, but the hearts of men; and it can be constantly and joyfully realized through faith in the fatherly providence of God, childlike humility, and the exercise of prayer, in which by the Spirit every member of the kingdom enjoys access to the King who is now also his Father. The organization of the kingdom, in consequence, can only be conceived as a hidden order by which all things work together for good to them that love God. In what sense, and under what conditions, Jesus held that this spiritual order, at present grasped by faith alone, would ultimately become visible to all eyes, is one of the most difficult of New Testament problems; but there is no question that the essence of his gospel was present peace in the forgiveness of sins—peace, not as a subjective feeling, but as admission to the peace and order of the spiritual kingdom.

On this doctrine the Torah at once loses the place

which it held in Judaism and can no longer be thought of as the condition the observance of which would secure the inbringing of the future glory. To the details of ceremonial observance Jesus was rather neutral than hostile; his polemic against the Pharisees had for its point that the strictest observance of legal precepts does not necessarily include that childlike obedience and love of the heart which alone has religious value. But this being granted, it merely required the experimental proof that the Spirit of Christ could manifest itself unmistakeably in men beyond the pale of circumcision to cause Christianity to drop the whole system of legal observances as superseded in Christ.

But as the whole Old Testament was taken over by the Christian Church as a holy book, it was necessary to find an expression for the attitude of Christians to the Law, which they still read as God's word.

Paul's formula (Gal. iii.) is that the Law came in *from the side*, and served as a pædagog—*we might almost say a nurse*—to watch over the infant heir of the promise. This profound view is in thorough accord with the history. The law formed a religious habit in Israel which, while it cramped, yet helped to preserve in the national consciousness, the element of spiritual faith in the prophetic word. It prevented Israel from losing its grip of the order of the kingdom of God; and thus, when all the other ancient religions were merging in a compound of atheism and grovelling superstition, a field was found in Palestine where the teaching of Christ could take root and fructify, and from which the good seed was spread abroad to fill the world. But its work was done as soon as the higher teaching took its place.

Now it is plain that Paul's doctrine about the Law does not contain any distinction between moral, civil, and ceremonial elements. The characteristic of Judaism—that is of the religion of Israel after Ezra—was the formulation of

all parts of the religious life in a code of laws, so that the man who fully followed these laws could feel assured that he was living in harmony with the revealed plan of salvation. The very essence of this scheme was that civil and ceremonial duties were placed under the same positive sanctions with moral duties. The system of the Law could only stand or fall as a whole, and Paul teaches that it is replaced in all its parts by the new principle of faith, in which the assurance of acceptance with God is no longer sought by reference to an outward rule, and in which right actions are done not because they are commanded in a book, but because the new life demands them. Sin is to the Christian not breach of a law, but an action that mars the play and growth of the new and heavenly life.

On this view no command is binding on Christians simply because it is found in the Old Testament. Old Testament and New Testament morality correspond in so far as the Old Testament dispensation was all along a training towards Christian life; but the correspondence of two stages of life related to one another as childhood and manhood is not such that everything permitted to the child would be becoming in the man, or everything forbidden to the child unbecoming in the man. To us the Old Testament law is of perpetual value, because it explains the historical basis on which Christian morality was built, and the ethical presuppositions of the society to which the New Testament was addressed. Christianity infuses a new spirit and principle into moral life. But all moral life has a traditional element, or, rather, presupposes certain fixed social conditions and established moral habits. The conditions and habits which the New Testament presupposes are those formed by the Law; and thus to know the Law is the condition of understanding the life of primitive Christianity, from which modern Christian life has been produced in continuous development.

Had time permitted, it would have been useful to examine the historical causes that have led to that distinction of moral, civil, and ceremonial laws, which has played so large a part in practical controversy about the use of the Old Testament. But this is impossible at present; and, in closing, I shall simply state one or two practical conclusions as to the use of the Old Testament to Christians.

To the theologian the fundamental use of the Old Testament is historical. On the one hand its ideals and promises are the historical presuppositions on which Jesus built his ideal. In them religion took a line of aspiration which could only be satisfied by the gospel. And on the other hand the legal parts of the Old Testament are the key to the social and ethical system from which Christianity went forth, and from which it carried over many ethical habits quite opposed to those of Pagan morality. On both sides the New Testament cannot be understood without the Old.

I think that this historical view should have a much larger place in Christian teaching than is usually assigned to it. It is not really more difficult, and it is infinitely more tangible, than the abstract theories of the relation of the two dispensations usually current. But it will be asked whether on this way of studying the Old Testament, its practical use for edification to the unlearned can be made as simple and direct as on the old methods. I think that it can.

In the first place, the direct edification derived from Bible reading lies less in individual doctrines and precepts than in the fact that, in reading the utterances of the prophet's hope or the psalmist's faith, we feel ourselves lifted above the petty interests of earthly and transitory things, into a region where man holds direct converse with things unseen and eternal and with a personal and loving God. In this sense the Old Testament is as fruitful on the new theory as on the old: "Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and were not put to shame." The more strictly historical

our study of the Old Testament is, the more clear and forcible does this aspect of Israel's religion become.

Then, again, it will always remain true, that spiritual and moral principles, like material organisms, are more easily understood in their germinal form. The religion of Isaiah, if we do not overlay it with a mass of traditional exegesis, represents fundamental aspects of all true religion in an elementary shape; the Psalms express the utterance of faith in its simplest embodiment. It requires no philosophy to feel this; and all experience shews that the Christian individual, whose own life runs through stages in many respects parallel to the history of the Church, can often find the precise message which his soul requires most readily in the elementary utterances of the Old Testament. Nor is there much risk that the devotional reading of the Old Testament will Judaize the Christian. For the ideal parts of the Old Testament are those which speak most directly to the heart of faith, and they are the very parts from which Jesus and the Apostles drew the support of their spiritual life.

W. ROBERTSON SMITH.

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#### THE BOOK OF ISAIAH. CHAPTERS XL.-LXVI.

##### IV. JEHOVAH, GOD OF ISRAEL, THE FIRST AND THE LAST.

IN Chapter xl. the Prophet, in order both to comfort and to teach his people, set before them Jehovah, their God, the Incomparable, with sarcastic sidethrusts at the idols. Here it was the immeasurable power of Jehovah, the Creator, the Sustainer of creation, who shewed his might in commanding the movements of the stars and breaking up the most powerful combinations of men, that was made prominent. In comparison of this Being, or rather from the point of view of his consciousness of Himself, all things

recede into nothingness. And to confirm this conception of God the Prophet names Him the Holy One: "To whom then will ye liken me, saith the Holy One (*Kadosh*)?" Obviously, however, such a view of Jehovah, though it excludes all others from being thought of as gods, is not yet complete. For though this incomparableness or matchlessness of Jehovah, according to which He is God alone, was represented as shewing itself in sudden and destructive interferences in the world of mankind (xl. 23, 24), no account was presented of his general relations to the world. The Prophet proceeds to furnish this in Chapter xli. some verses of which may be quoted.

1 Keep silence before me, ye isles; and let the peoples renew their strength; let them draw near; then let them speak; let us come near together to judgment. 2 Who hath raised up from the east; calleth (him) in righteousness to follow him; giveth nations before him, and treadeth down kings; maketh their sword as dust and their bow as driven stubble? 3 He pursueth them, and passeth on safely,—a way with his feet that none hath trod. 4 Who hath wrought and done it? who calleth the generations from the beginning;<sup>1</sup> I, Jehovah, am the first, and with the last I am He.

5 The isles have seen it and are afraid; the ends of the earth tremble; they draw near and come (together). 6 They help every one his neighbour, and every one saith to his brother, Be of good courage. 7 So the carpenter encourageth the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smiteth the anvil, saying of the soldering, It is good; and he fasteneth it with nails that it may not totter.

8 But thou Israel my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham that loved me; 9 thou whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the corners

<sup>1</sup> This is not clear English, but perhaps it expresses the original. The question, Who hath wrought? is not answered, the answer is self-evident, and the prophet appends in apposition to *who?* a larger definition of Jehovah, which generalizes the idea involved in the question. The sense will be little different if we suppose the question to be real and to receive an answer in the end of Verse 4.



thereof, and have said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee and not cast thee away; 10 fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I strengthen thee, yea I help thee, yea I hold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. 11 Behold all they that are incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded, they that strive with thee shall be as nothing and shall perish. . .

21 Produce your cause, saith Jehovah; bring forward your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. 22 Let them bring forward and declare unto us what shall happen. The former things, What are they? declare (them) that we may consider (them) and know their issue; or shew us things to come. 23 Declare the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods; yea do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. 24 Behold ye are of nothing, and your work of nought; an abomination is he that chooseth you.

25 I have raised up from the north, and he is come; from the rising of the sun one that calleth upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay. 26 Who hath declared it beforehand that we may know? and beforetime that we may say, He is right? yea there is none that declared, yea there is none that shewed, yea there is none that heard your words. 27 I first give to Zion (one saying), Behold! behold them! and to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings. 28 And when I look there is no man, and among these there is no counsellor, that when I ask of them can return an answer. 29 Behold all of them, their works are vanity and naught, their molten images wind and confusion.

The passage is connected with the preceding by the phrase "renew their strength." Chapter xl. ended with saying, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength," a word of encouragement and hope to Israel; this Chapter begins with, "Let the peoples renew their strength," a challenge and threat to the idol-worshipping nations. The Lord challenges the nations to enter into a plea with Him, to come with Him before a tribunal,

that decision may be given between them. This is a mere form of speech, a favourite forensic figure, employed for the purpose of setting forth in a lively manner the cause of the Lord and his people on the one side, and the cause of the idol-worshippers and their gods on the other. The point in dispute is not specially referred to; any one can gather it when he considers who the disputants are. Nor, of course, is there any real tribunal before which the plea is argued, not even, as Rosenmüller suggested, the tribunal of Reason. The arguments which the Lord uses on his side are two: the raising up of Cyrus and his victorious career; and the prediction of this beforehand. Both of these things He claims to have done.

Verses 2, 3 have been somewhat differently rendered by different writers, though the general meaning is plain. The great subject spoken of is Cyrus. It is probable that the first clause of verse 2 is to be taken by itself, "Who raised up from the East?" just as verse 25, "I have raised up from the North and he is come"; the person raised not being named in either case. Others make the second clause relative, "Who raised up from the East (the man) whom righteousness calleth to follow it (or, Him)?" The order of words in the second clause is rather against this; and the idea that Righteousness calleth Cyrus to follow *it* is unnatural and hardly justified even by Chapter lviii. 8, while the Lord's calling of Cyrus to follow Him has its supports in Chapter xlv. 2, 13: "I will go before thee," and "I have raised him up in righteousness." On the other hand there is a want of concinnity in the expression, "whom Righteousness calleth to follow Him" (lit. to his foot), in this that the caller is one and the person followed another. If the relative construction be adopted, the best rendering would be: "Whom He calleth in righteousness to follow Him." To render the word "righteousness" here by "victory" or "success," is not to translate this prophecy, but to

write a different one. The questions here and in verse 4 may be taken as those in Chapter xl. 12, 18, requiring no answer, the answer being obvious, or the answer may be supposed given in the last clause of verse 4.

Verses 5-7 give a grotesque picture of the condition of the terror-stricken idolaters before Cyrus, their coming together for mutual help and encouragement, and their excited and assiduous manufacture of new idols—the gods by whom they expect to be delivered; see in illustration the passage Chapter xlvii. 12-15.

Verses 8-19. But Israel also is alarmed, and the Lord assures his people that they have nought to fear, for they are his servant, whom He has irrevocably chosen, and whom He holds fast by the right hand of his "righteousness," just as He has called Cyrus, before whom they are alarmed, in "righteousness." All they that oppose them shall perish.

✓ In verses 21-29 the Lord returns to his controversy with the idol-gods (verses 21-24) and their worshippers (verses 25-29), for they are one. He challenges the idols to shew their godhead by predicting what will happen. This general demand is then broken into two, either to shew what former prophecies they had given forth, that they might be compared with their fulfilment and be seen to be prophecies, or to prophesy now things to come; or finally, to give any sign of vitality and power by doing aught, good or evil. They are silent, however; and therefore He pronounces his verdict upon them: "Behold ye are of nothing, an abomination is he that chooseth you." The concluding verses (25-29) recapitulate the two arguments which the Lord uses in his own behalf, his raising up of Cyrus, and his having predicted his career; and, as the last verse shews, they are spoken with reference to the idol-worshippers: "Behold all of them, vanity and naught are their works" (*i.e.* their idols, the works of their hands). The

idol-worshippers are frequently challenged, as having gods among them and being their prophets, to utter or to shew that they have ever uttered some prediction, *e.g.* xliii. 9, xliv. 7, xlviii. 14.

A different sense is put upon the phrase "former things" in verse 22 by some interpreters, *e.g.* Delitzsch. They consider the phrase to mean not "former prophecies" or "things formerly predicted," but things still future though lying in the near future, and "former" in respect of other more distant future things. The question, though not of much importance in itself, has a bearing upon the position among events occupied by the Prophet. A comparison of the various passages makes it difficult to accept Delitzsch's view. First, the word "declare" does not mean in itself to *predict*; it derives this meaning from the connexion (comp. Chap. xlviii. 20). Again, to offer the idols the choice of predicting the near or distant future would really, in the sense which the Prophet attaches to "predict," be to give them no choice; the one is as difficult as the other. And in answer to Delitzsch's approving quotation from Hahn, that the "former things" denote "the events about to happen first in the immediate future, which it is not so difficult to prognosticate from signs that are discernible in the present," it must be said that to "prognosticate from signs discernible" is not what the Prophet means by "prediction," and neither what he claims for Jehovah nor what he demands from the idols and their worshippers; and to deny to the idol-worshippers the power of doing this would be to rate their intelligence a great deal lower than in many cases it must have been. And, finally, the interpretation referred to is contrary to the usage of language in this prophecy. The phrase occurs various times, and always in the sense of former predictions or things formerly predicted. In Chapter xlii. 9, "the former things, behold they have come, and new things do I declare." The "new things" are the

✓ things over which all creation takes up a "new song," namely, the Restoration of Israel and the evangelizing of the nations through the Servant, who is a "covenant of the people, and a light of the gentiles." The "former things" are things now already accomplished. Again, in Chapter xliii. 9, "Let all the nations be gathered together, who among them will declare such a thing? or let them shew former things; let them give their witnesses that they may be found in the right. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." The phrase, "Who among them will declare such a thing," *i.e.* the Restoration of Israel from the North and South (verse 6) means, "Who will give such a prediction of the future?" and this is set in contrast to, "or let them mention former things," *i.e.* former predictions, and bring forward witnesses to shew that they actually uttered such predictions (comp. Chap. xlv. 8). Finally, in Chapter xlviii. 3, it is said, "The former things I have declared from the past. . . . suddenly I did them and they came to pass. . . . I shew thee new things from now" (comp. verse 14 *seq.*).

The "former things," then, are things formerly predicted; and the choice given to the idols and their worshippers is either to point to such former predictions that they may be verified by comparison with events, or to shew things still in the future, for Jehovah can both refer to former predictions and predict "new things." It is probable that these former things are not instances of prophecy in the general history of Israel; they are prophecies belonging to the circle of events now transpiring; they are the earlier events in the great train of occurrences, the "new things" of which are the Restoration of Israel and the conversion of the nations. The Prophet indicates as much explicitly when he makes the Lord say, in reference to Cyrus: "Who declared this from former times?" (Chap. xli. 26.) And the same appears even more clearly

from the passage Chapter *xlvi.* 14 *seq.* It is an interesting ✓  
 ✓ question, When were these predictions in regard to Cyrus  
 and Babylon uttered? or To what is it that the Prophet  
 refers? Such predictions certainly do not belong to this  
 Book. On the contrary, the events predicted are already  
 partly fulfilled, so far fulfilled indeed that the Prophet sees  
 their complete fulfilment and argues from it. The passages  
 have an interest as indicating where precisely the Prophet  
 stood in the march of events, what "former things,"  
 already virtually accomplished, lay behind him, and face to  
 face with what "new things" he felt himself to be standing.  
 This new and greater evolution, at the starting point of  
 which he stands, the Prophet indicates by the word *now*,  
 of which he makes such frequent use, *e.g.* Chapter *xl.* 1,  
 where the transition is made from Israel's present condition  
 of "a people robbed and spoiled" to her universal restora-  
 tion from every corner of the earth; similarly *xl.* 1; so  
*xlvi.* 16, "And now hath Jehovah sent me with his  
 spirit;" and *xli.* 5, where the Servant of the Lord feels  
 his failure to be a thing lying behind him, and his great  
 double task in Israel and among the nations about to be  
 crowned with success.

To come, however, to the main idea of the Chapter. It  
 is evident, to begin with, that from the more abstract  
 delineation of Jehovah the God of Israel, given in Chapter  
 ✓ *xl.*, the Prophet descends in this Chapter into the field of  
 history and events. It is the march of Cyrus and other  
 great transactions now occurring that engage his attention.  
 In a dramatic way he introduces Jehovah, God of Israel,  
 putting two questions to the idol-worshippers, "Who raised  
 up from the East?" and "Who declared it from afore-  
 time?" This is but the Prophet's manner of expressing  
 his own thought of Jehovah. His own consciousness of  
 Jehovah, God of Israel, interprets these events to him; and  
 he exhibits this consciousness in a dramatic way before his

people to elevate their minds to the same lofty plane of thinking of their God as he himself occupied, that he might inspire them with hope and faith : for the events occurring are in truth working out their salvation, only faith on their part is essential to secure it : " Oh that thou wouldst hearken to my commandments, then should thy peace be as a river " (xlvi. 18). The Prophet is not interested in *proving* anything about Jehovah to his people. Prophecy ✓ in his day was far beyond the stage of seeking to prove ; this indeed was not at any time its task. He unfolds before them his thought of Jehovah ; if it were only also the thought and feeling of his people, how near and full their salvation would be ! Ewald inscribes the Chapter, *The false gods and their people* ; Delitzsch, *The God of the world's history, and of Prophecy*. The two inscriptions supplement one another. Ewald's, however, instead of expressing the primary thought, expresses rather what is the immediate antithesis of it, the idea which the primary thought suggests as the other side of it. This reflection of the primary thought certainly receives expression towards the end of the Chapter, where the idea is suggested that the nations, having no true God as the source of light and life to them, have no destiny or future before them, at least no future which they will be able to develop out of the powers within themselves ; for the Prophet considers the source of all development among a people to be the Deity among them. The nations have a destiny, but they must receive help from without in order to reach it. And this idea is what leads immediately in the next Chapter to the thought of Israel's destiny and task, who is the servant of the Lord : " Behold my servant, I will put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the gentiles." While Delitzsch's definition, however, expresses more truly the primary thought of the Chapter, his exposition is defective in making the " world's history " and " prophecy " two

unconnected things, two independent proofs of Jehovah's Godhead. They are rather one, or two sides of the more general truth, that the Lord is "the first and the last."

- ✓ He initiates, and He winds up, all the movements of history. This is the idea under which the prophet desires his people to place the march of Cyrus and the revolutions attending it. But this great God who is "the first and the last" is the God of Israel, who saith not to the seed of Jacob seek ye me in the waste, in uncertain and undeterminate conditions, "Jehovah doeth nothing, but he reveleth his secret to his servants the prophets" (Amos iii. 7). Jehovah is the absolute, the Holy One, but He has become the Holy One of Israel—contradiction almost as it seems.
- ✓ The great movements in history are not sporadic exhibitions of the power of a Being who has given no clue that can lead to the comprehension of Him. They are steps in the evolution of a great purpose, and this purpose has been revealed to Israel from of old, for Israel is the Lord's servant in carrying it out. If Jehovah is the first and the last, He foresees his own great operations; it is, however, his relation to Israel that makes Him prophesy them. Thus events and prophecy go hand in hand, the one is but the reflection beforehand of the other; both are but one manifestation of the God of Israel, the first and the last, and of his designs of grace with the world. Therefore the Prophet when he insists on the fact that the Lord prophesies usually couples his operation also with it; *e.g.* Chapters xliii. 9 *seq.*, xliv. 6 *seq.*; especially Chapter xlviii. 12-16:

Hearken unto me, O Jacob; I am the first; I am also the last. All ye assemble yourselves and hear; which among them hath declared these things? He whom Jehovah loveth will do his pleasure on Babylon. I, even I, have spoken; I have brought him, and his way shall prosper. . . . I have not spoken in secret from the beginning.



And even more pointedly in the passage, Chapter xlvi. 9-11 :

Remember the former things from of old, for I am God, and there is none else ; from the beginning declaring the end, and from ancient times things not yet done ; saying, My counsel shall stand, . . . calling a ravenous bird from the East, from a far country the man of my counsel.

This, then, is the great thought of Chapter xli., as these supplementary passages expound it, the thought that Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the First and the Last ; that the events that happen are but fragments of the great movement which HE is leading on toward the goal of his counsel ; and that prophecy is the reflection of them, flashes of light from the self-conscious and self-consistent Intelligence, the eternal Light, who has condescended to dwell and to shine in the bosom of Israel.

The doctrine of God in these prophecies is a very highly developed one, on some sides even more highly than in the Book of Job. Beyond a few words on the two expressions which distinguish these two chapters, viz. *Holiness* (Chap. xl.) and *Righteousness* (Chap. xli.), it is not necessary to go further into it. Much has been written regarding the progressive advancement of the idea of God in the mind of the people of Israel. This idea of advancement, though a great truth in Old Testament revelation, is in some danger of being overstretched. Though the conceptions entertained regarding God find broader expression in later prophets, the conceptions themselves are to be found in the oldest prophetic writings. At the period of the dissolution of the State, and during the Exile, closer contact with the nations and their false religions, and the seductive influence of these upon many of their own people, caused the Prophets to set the truth in sharper contrast to what was false, and thus not only to express their own doctrine of God positively, but to confirm it by express denial of that which was opposed to it. But otherwise the doctrine of God is the

same throughout all the prophetic writings. One may go further, indeed, and say that it is the same throughout the writings of the whole Old Testament, even the oldest.

There are some peculiarities in this doctrine which distinguish it from that of modern theology. For example, it  
✓ never occurred to any Prophet or Writer of the Old Testament to prove or argue for the existence of God. To do so might well have seemed an absurdity, for all Old Testament writers move among ideas that presuppose God's existence. Prophecy itself is the direct outcome of his influence. The people of Israel, in their character and relations, are his creation. Scripture does indeed speak of men who say in their heart that there is no God; but these are the fools, that is, the practically ungodly, and their denial is not a theoretical or speculative one, but merely what may be held to be the expression of their manner of life. Even the phrase, "There is no God," hardly means that God is not, but that He is not present, does not interfere in life; and, counting on this absence of God from the affairs of the world and on impunity, men become corrupt and do abominable works (Psalm xiv.; Job xxii. 12). And for their wickedness they shall be destroyed from the earth, with all the nations that forget God. Yet even this forgetfulness of God by the nations is regarded as something temporary; it is a forgetting only, not an obliteration of the knowledge of God from the human mind, which cannot be; and these nations shall yet remember and turn unto the Lord.

As this is the case, Scripture has no occasion to speculate how the idea of God's existence arises in the mind. Its position is far in front of this, so to speak. It nowhere contemplates men as ignorant of the existence of God, and therefore nowhere depicts the rise or dawn of the idea of his existence on men's minds. The Hebrew comes, possessed of the conception of God, to face and observe the world, and his conception of God explains the world to him; the

world does not suggest to him an idea hitherto strange, that of the existence of God. There seems no passage in the Old Testament which represents men as reaching the knowledge of the existence of God through nature or the events of providence, although there are some passages which imply that false ideas of what God is may be corrected by the observation of nature and life. When the Singer in the nineteenth Psalm says, "The heavens declare the glory of God," all that he means is that the glory of God, who is and is known and is Creator, may be seen reflected on the heavens. But the Poet only recognized in the heavens what he already carried in his heart. When, however, Isaiah asks, "To whom then will ye liken me, saith the Holy One? Lift up your eyes and see, Who created all these?" he may go somewhat further, and teach that men's conceptions of God, who is Creator, may be intensified, or even clarified, by observation of his mighty works.

Naturally the Old Testament as little thinks of arguing that God may be known as it thinks of arguing that He exists. Its position, here again, is far in front of such an argument. How should men think of arguing that God could be known who were persuaded that they knew Him, and were in fellowship with Him, whose consciousness and whole mind were filled and aglow with the thought of Him, and who felt themselves moved and enlightened by his Spirit?

On all these questions the Old Testament has nothing to say; they are questions that lie behind its standing-point. When we come to the next question, however, viz. How may God be known? it has a very definite doctrine, that of Revelation. If man knows God, it is because He has made Himself known to man. All knowledge of Him is due to Himself who communicates, not to man who attains or achieves. The idea of man reaching to knowledge or fellowship of God through his own efforts is not that of the Old

Testament. God speaks, He appears; man listens and beholds. Moses and the Prophets are not philosophic minds, reflecting on the Unseen, and forming conclusions regarding it, or ascending to elevated conceptions of Godhead; the Unseen manifests itself before them, and they know it. Such a Revelation is everywhere supposed in the Old Testament.

It was said that this Prophet's conceptions of God, as exhibited in Chapters xl., xli., might be expressed by the two words, Holiness and Righteousness: "To whom will ye liken me? saith the Holy One" (Chap. xl. 25); "Thou Israel, my Servant, fear not; I hold thee with the right hand of my Righteousness" (chap. xli. 8-10). The one term "Holiness" refers to what God is in Himself; the other, "Righteousness," refers rather to his operations in Salvation and History. ✓

Much has been written on this term "Holy." The meaning of the phrase is to be reached by observing the usage, not by inquiring into the meaning of the root. In all ✓ questions of this sort the Concordance, not the Lexicon, ought to be our guide. Again, the usage of the Prophets and the oldest historical literature, where the word is employed in its natural sense, should be followed, not that of the legislative elements of the Pentateuch, where the use of the word is technical and perhaps derived. Primarily, the word "Holy" is applied to God; its application to men or things is secondary, arising from its proper application to God. When applied to men and things, it describes them as belonging to God, as brought into the sphere of the *Divine*; but such a use could not be primary, it presupposes an original application of the term to God Himself. ✓ When applied to God, the word "Holy" does not describe a moral quality in the Divine mind; it rather suggests that in God which distinguishes Him from all else, men or false gods, viz. just *godhead*. Hence the term may describe any

action or expression of Jehovah, whereby He manifests Himself to be God. When the Prophet Amos represents Jehovah as saying, "I have sworn by my holiness," the expression is little different from this, "I have sworn by Myself, who am God." Hence the word became the highest expression for Jehovah's Godhead, for Godhead in the most absolute sense, as for example in Isaiah vi. (compare Hosea xi. 9, "I am *God* and not man; the *Holy One* in the midst of thee"). The phrase "Holy One of Israel," means the Holy One who is in Israel, whom Israel knows and alone knows, who Himself, being known only to Israel, receives name from Israel, and who confers on Israel that which having Him who is God alone within them must confer. But this relation to Israel is no element in the conception of "Holy" itself; on the contrary, the relation to Israel is rather a contradiction of the conception and a marvel. When Isaiah says, Chapter lvii. 15:

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is The Holy One; I dwell in the High and Holy Place; but with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit:

the first half of the verse expresses the meaning of the Holy One, and the second half the additional element of *Israel*.

When it is said that Jehovah holds Israel by the right hand of his *righteousness*, and that He has called Cyrus in *righteousness*, it is evident that "righteousness" here is no attribute of God Himself. Nor can it be any retributive righteousness as an objective rule of dealing with the nations. But such expressions as "calleth Cyrus in righteousness to follow Him" suggest the idea of a rule or principle of some kind. This idea lies at the root of the term "righteousness." To be righteous is to be in conformity to a norm. Righteousness is such a conformity. The norm or standard may be of any kind, or at least of many kinds; but that is right or righteous in the sphere where such a stan-

standard exists which is in harmony with the standard. The standard may be consuetudinary law, or the idea of the Old Testament constitution, or the general moral code, or any other to which conduct should be conformed. When, therefore, it is said that Jehovah holds Israel by the right hand of his righteousness, that He has raised up Cyrus in righteousness, and that He is righteous and (therefore) a Saviour (chap. xlv. 21), the idea finds expression that in holding Israel, calling Cyrus, and saving, God is conforming to some standard. This is but the idea which was expressed in the name, "the First and the Last." It is suggested that God has a purpose and is carrying it out in all that He is observed performing, and that all his operations are in conformity to it. In most of the Prophets

✓ God's righteousness is conformity to the relation into which He has entered with Israel; it is a conformity to the Covenant. And considering the wide purpose which in this Prophet the Covenant has, being a Covenant with Israel for the ultimate salvation of the world, if we suppose this the meaning here, we shall not go far astray. This Prophet, however, is distinguished by his universalism; and there is a very remarkable passage which seems to give God's righteousness immediately a bearing as wide as creation (Chap. xlv. 18 *seq.*).

Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens (he is God), that formed the earth and made it (he establisheth it, he created it not a waste, he made it to be inhabited), I am the Lord and there is none else. . . . Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. I have sworn by myself, that to me every knee shall bow. Surely in the Lord is righteousness and strength.

One last point may be referred to. Though this Prophet's doctrine of God, of his unity and spirituality and majesty, is very lofty, there is no Prophet whose use of anthropomorphic expressions is so broad. Such anthropomorphisms

cannot lead us astray in regard to the conceptions of this Prophet; but the combination in him of two such opposite methods of conceiving God suggests to us how we should estimate anthropomorphic language in other Old Testament writers, who may not have occasion to give expression to such pure and lofty general thoughts of God side by side with it as this Prophet does.

A. B. DAVIDSON.

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EZEKIEL: AN IDEAL BIOGRAPHY.

III.

THE vision of the prophet had brought before him the manifold forms of idolatrous worship at Jerusalem. He has now to learn that the evil will not go unpunished, and to look upon the ministers of vengeance as they go forth to their dread work. The vision which he describes reminds us of the seven trumpets or the seven vials of the Apocalypse (Rev. viii. 2, xvi. 1), and probably suggested the symbolism of those visions. Seven men were seen to come forth from the northern upper gate of the Temple, one of them in the white garments of the priesthood. As the leader of those who, as the angels of God, are thus sent on their work of punishment, he appears in the character of a scribe as well in that of a priest, and wears, after the manner of the East (as seen, *e.g.* in many of the Nineveh and Kouyunjik sculptures), a writer's inkhorn and reed-pen suspended at his side. With these, as the sequel shews, he is to mark those who have not bowed the knee in the false worship of the time, and are therefore to be exempted from the punishment which falls upon the guilty. The command to spare or to smite comes from "the glory of the God of Israel." That glory had moved from the cherub, *i.e.* the place between the cherubim of the mercy-seat in the

Holy of Holies to the threshold of the House, and from thence gave the command to the priestly angel and his comrades, who stood by the altar that had been desecrated by the false worship or hypocrisy of the people. That command reminds us at once of the earlier sign of the blood sprinkled on the doorposts of the houses of the Israelites, as a token that they were to be spared by the destroying angel who was sent forth against the Egyptians on the night of the first passover (Exod. xii. 22), and of the later mark, the seal of the servants of God in their foreheads, of the Apocalyptic vision (Rev. vii. 3). The mark in this case was, as the Hebrew verb indicates, to be the Hebrew letter *Tau*, the oldest form of which, as in Phœnician and earlier Hebrew alphabets, was that of a cross (see Fürst's *Lexicon*; Gesenius, *Thesaurus*; and *Monum. Phœn.*, p. 47). Such a mark had been in use from the time of the Book of Job as the equivalent of a signature<sup>1</sup> (Job xxxi. 35); or, as in later Arab use, was branded on sheep and cattle as a sign of ownership. To assume that there was any reference in it to the significance which was to attach to the sign of the Cross in Christian symbolism, would be perhaps too bold a hypothesis; but the fact that such a symbol appeared in the *cruz ansata* (the cross with a handle to it) of Egyptian monuments, as the sign of life, may possibly have determined its selection in this instance, when it was used to indicate those who, as the people of Jehovah, bearing his stamp upon them, were to escape the doom of death passed upon the guilty. For the latter there was to be the sharp sword of judgment, beginning with those who had defiled the sanctuary with their abominations, the "ancients of the house of Israel," whom we have seen in Chap. viii. 11. The courts of the Temple were to be

<sup>1</sup> Where the English version has "my desire is . . ." the true rendering is "Behold my signature;" (i.e. my mark) "the Almighty will answer me." Compare Canon Cook (in *Speaker's Commentary*) and Delitzsch on Job xxxi. 35.



filled, as they actually were filled when the city was taken by the Chaldeans, with the bodies of the slain. The prophet entreated for his people, but in vain. The guilt of the transgressors had passed beyond the possibility of forgiveness, for it had taken the form of an actual denial of the sovereignty of Jehovah over his people. The formula of that denial was, "The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not." The work of judgment as seen in the prophet's vision went on unsparingly, and the scribe-priest made his report, "I have done as thou hast commanded me" (Ezek. ix. 5-11).

Fire was, however, to follow on the sword. Here also what was actually to be wrought by human agents, was seen in vision as the act of the seven angel-forms, who were thought of as the ministers of Divine vengeance. The leader of that band was to take burning coals (symbols, as in Pss. xviii. 12, cxx. 4, of the thunderbolts of God) as from the altar over which the cherubim were seen standing, on the right, *i.e.* on the south side of the sanctuary, as the region associated with the thought of fire, and scatter them over the city. It was at this moment that there flashed upon the prophet's mind, apparently for the first time, the identity of what he now looked upon with what he had seen on the banks of Chebar. The "living creatures" of that vision were one with the "cherubim" of the Temple. The glory which he had seen resting upon the living creatures was that of the Lord of Hosts who "dwelleth between the cherubim" (Ps. lxxx. 1; Isa. xxxvii. 16). And then there came, as the terrible conclusion of the whole, the vision of their departure. Wheels, cherubim, the glory cloud, the sapphire throne, rose from their place, and passed out of the eastern gate of the Temple; (Ezek. x. 17-19) the very gate, we must remember, at which the prophet had seen the worshippers of the rising sun (Ezek. viii. 16). As with the voice of which Josephus tells among the portents of the

destruction of the later Temple by the Romans, that proclaimed from the Holy Place in the silence of the night, "*Let us depart hence!*" so here there was the visible sign that the Temple was no longer the dwelling-place of the Lord of Israel, but a deserted and desecrated shrine (Jos., *Wars of the Jews*, vi. 5).

There was a strange significance in the fact, that while Ezekiel thus saw the vision of the glory of the Lord at the eastern gate, outside the Temple, the five and twenty sun-worshippers whom he had before looked on, were again seen, with two princes of the people, Jaazaniah and Pelatiah, at their head, the chief promoters of the evil which was eating like a canker into the nation's life, standing there in their attitude of boastful defiance. "It is not near," they said, when they heard from Jeremiah or others of the coming judgment. And when they learnt that he had bidden the exiles at Babylon, Ezekiel's companions, to build houses there (Jer. xxix. 5), they met that counsel with derision.<sup>1</sup> "No," they said; "let us build houses here." There is no danger of exile for us—Jerusalem shall yet grow and spread beyond its present boundaries. They said practically, as the men of Samaria had said before them, "The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones" (Isa. ix. 10). "It (the city) is the caldron" (not, perhaps, without an allusive sneer at the form of Jeremiah's vision of the "seething-pot" with its face towards the North (Jer. i. 13), "and as the caldron keeps the flesh from burning in the fire, the city and its walls will protect us against the enemies without" (Ezek. xi. 7).

<sup>1</sup> The words are difficult, and have been variously interpreted. (1) As by Ewald, "Is it not near (for us) to build houses?"—Is not that the work that lies before us? or (2), as by Keil, "The house-building (i.e. that of the exiles, which Jeremiah had counselled) is not near (for us). We are here and shall remain here": or (3), as by the LXX. and Vulgate, "Have not houses been first built by us, and shall we not inhabit them?" The Authorized Version, which follows Luther, however, seems to me preferable. In any case, the words imply a self-confident security.

In replying to that boast, the prophet answers the fools according to their folly. At first he accepts their symbol, and interprets it after another fashion; not quite, perhaps, after that of the Bismarck taunt, and yet in a measure reminding us of it. "Yes, the city was a caldron, and the corpses of those who were slain by sword or pestilence were seething in it." But the hopes which they embodied in their parable he dashes to the ground. The city would not protect them from exile. They who made the boast should be taken out of that caldron, and delivered into the hands of the aliens, and should be judged, each according to his works, "in the border of Israel," *i.e.* at some place outside the frontier. Historically, Ezekiel seems to contemplate a scene like that of which we read at Riblah (Jer. xxxix. 4, 5), and which may be regarded as fulfilling his prediction.

The prophet—still, of course, in vision—pictured himself to himself as uttering these words to the five and twenty princes. He was terrified to see that they were as a sharp two-edged sword, with power to smite and to slay. One of the leaders named at the outset fell dead, as if overwhelmed with remorse and shame; and the prophet, as one awe-stricken at the terrible suddenness of the judgment, fell on his face to intercede for the others who remained. Was the sequel to be like this beginning? Would Jehovah thus "make a full end of the remnant of Israel"? (Ezek. xi. 13.)

The answer to that prayer was to indicate to the prophet that the true "remnant" (Isaiah's work had stamped that word indelibly on the minds of his successors) was not to be found in the apostate people of Jerusalem, but in the companions of his exile, among whom his lot was cast. They were his true "brethren," the "people of his kindred"; that is, as the Hebrew word (*G'ellah*) implied, those for whom he was to act as the *Goel*, or next of kin. For them, therefore, he might plead, and do the kinsman's work of

"redeeming" (Lev. xxv. 24-48; Ruth iv. 6), but not for those who spoke of them with scorn, treating their exile as a virtual excommunication, bidding them "depart far off from Jehovah," boasting that the land of Judah was given to its inhabitants as a permanent possession (Ezek. xi. 15). The hope which was given him for these was to balance the desponding dread with which he looked forward to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and those who still remained there. For those who were cast far off among the heathen, there was the pledge and promise that Jehovah would be to them there as a "sanctuary, for a little while,"<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* during the time of their exile, that He would thus fulfil the promise which Isaiah had left on record (Isa. viii. 14), and be to them, in the midst of their sufferings and their sorrows, as an asylum and a refuge. With this he combines, as Isaiah and his own master, Jeremiah, had done before him, the thought of an ultimate restoration, and rises, as if with the "new covenant" of the latter present to his mind (Jer. xxxi. 31), to the ideal of a time of a regenerated national life. "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." So should they learn to keep the Law which their fathers had not kept; "and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." Meanwhile judgment must do its work, and the heart which went after its "detestable things and its abominations" (Ezek. xi. 20, 21) must be left to itself.

The ecstasy which has thus filled three chapters of the prophet's book, during which he had been apparently still sitting entranced in his own house, in the land of exile,

<sup>1</sup> This seems a better rendering than "the little sanctuary" of the Authorized Version, though the latter has the sanction of the LXX. and Vulgate. Ewald's rendering, "I was to them but little of a sanctuary," gives a different and less satisfactory turn to the whole passage.

with the elders of Judah before him, marvelling at his rapt look and his silence, was now near its close. The cherubim and wheels and the glory clouds moved yet further from the Temple, and took their station on the Mount of Olives, as though looking back at once with indignation and pity on the holy place; and then the trance came to an end. Ezekiel travelled back again in spirit to them of the Captivity. He awoke, and behold, it was a dream. He was again in his own home and in the presence of his neighbours. To them he reported what the Lord had thus shewn to him.

We can well imagine that they must have said of him then, as he told them of his strange vision, as they said afterwards, "Doth he not speak parables?" (Ezek. xx. 49). Was he not a dreamer of dreams? Were they not *delirantium somnia*? The teaching by the tableaux of acted parables was, however, to be carried further, and to be presented in a yet stranger form. The prophet was seen in the act of one who is preparing for a migration, and preparing in secret, carrying out his portable property, clothes, cooking utensils, and the like, not at the front door of his dwelling, but making an opening in the wattled or mud wall of his house, and going out with his goods and chattels on his shoulders in the dusk of twilight.<sup>1</sup> When they asked what the strange act meant, they learnt that it was to be for them a dramatic presentation of what was then passing, or shortly about to pass, in Jerusalem itself, where not only the labourers and artisans, but the king himself, should be driven to a like ignominious departure from their homes, going out, as Zedekiah did, by the back-door, as it were, of his palace, with his face covered, so that he could not see the ground, "by the way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls" (Jer. xxxix. 4). To make his pre-

<sup>1</sup> The vividness of the picture becomes more striking if we think of the wall of the house as representing that of the city, into which, or upon which, houses were often built, as in Joshua ii. 15.

diction more memorable as a proof of his insight into the future, the prophet added that the attempted flight would be ineffectual, that the fugitive king would be taken as in a net, and that though he would be brought to Babylon, he should not see it, *i.e.* as the event was to interpret the words that seemed to assert so strange a paradox, that the cruelty of the Chaldean king should deprive him of his sight, as the punishment of his resistance, and that he would linger out the rest of his life in prison and in darkness (Jer. xxxix. 7). This acted parable was followed by yet another. Ezekiel was, as before, to impose on himself, of his own will, the privations that are incident to those who, having escaped from a besieged city, are wandering as fugitives. He was to "eat his bread with quaking and to drink his water with trembling" (Ezek. xii. 18). Crouching, with frightened look, as if dreading to be observed, he was seen, after he had left his house in the strange manner already noticed, to take his meals day by day, as though he were fleeing from the face of his enemies and eager to escape detection. The prediction which this symbolism implied was met on the banks of Chebar, as like forecasts had been in the land of Israel. The scoffers sneered at the non-fulfilment of these warnings of destruction. "The days were prolonged." Things would go on as they had done. No critical catastrophe was at hand. The "visions" of such men as Jeremiah and Ezekiel would "fail" of their fulfilment. The times for their fulfilment, if they ever came, were as yet far off. The prophet's answer to that taunt is two-fold. First, he asserts that the judgment is not far off, but near: "The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision." The word which he had spoken would be fulfilled in the days of those who heard it. It was natural enough that both taunt and answer should be repeated in slightly varied form. Iteration on both sides is, at all times, the great characteristic of such controversies. We need not be surprised, therefore,

to find the prophet recording as belonging to the history of another "word of the Lord," another special revelation, the sneer of the scoffers, that "the vision which he seeth is for many days to come," and his own reply that "none of the words of the Lord should be prolonged any more;" that there was an end of tarrying and delay (Ezek. xii. 21-28).

But there were other opponents of Ezekiel's mission besides the scornors. The false prophets, men and women, misled the people with their lying words, "following their own spirit," and not the Spirit of Jehovah, having "seen nothing" with the clearness of an open vision of the future (comp. Col. ii. 18), saying, "the Lord saith," when the Lord had not sent them; and for these he has a special message of sharp rebuke. They were, he tells them, as the "foxes in the desert," prowling among the ruins of a fallen and abandoned city; and undermining those ruins as they make holes for their own shelter (Ezek. xiii. 4-5). Such teachers were far indeed from being "repairers of the breach and restorers of paths to dwell in" (Isa. lviii. 12). It was not their work to build up the broken walls and to repair the fences. That work called for sharp rebukes and the preaching of repentance, and they contented themselves with speaking smooth things, with saying, Peace, when there was no peace, after the manner of the false prophets of all times (Isa. xxx. 10, xlviii. 22). The thought of the ruins and the fences of the deserted city leads, by a natural sequence of thought, to a change of metaphor. What we call "scamp-work" in building was as common, it would seem, in the East, in Ezekiel's time, as it is with us in the nineteenth century, and he finds in that work, with its self-interested trickeries and unsoundness a parable of the action of these dishonest guides. They were as one of those who build a wall of worthless materials, while another "daubs it with untempered mortar."<sup>1</sup> In words, in which we

<sup>1</sup> There seems no sufficient reason for substituting, as Keil does, the word

trace an echo of Isaiah's description, given under like conditions, of "the breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly in an instant" (Isa. xxx. 13), he declares that this structure, with its counterfeit stability, shall not stand. The "overflowing showers," and the "great hailstones," and the "stormy wind" (the words remind us of our Lord's parable of the house built on the sand, in Matthew vii. 25), of the Chaldean invaders as executing the sentence of the Divine wrath, should bring it low even to the ground, and when its fall came, men should take up their taunting proverb and ask derisively, "Where is the daubing wherewith ye daubed it?" and make answer to their own question, "The wall is no more, neither they that daubed it" (Ezek. xiii. 10-16).

And there were others who came under a like condemnation. Israel had its false prophetesses as well as its false prophets. The position occupied by Huldah during the reformation of Josiah had stimulated the imagination of the women of Jerusalem, and those who in Isaiah's time would have been conspicuous simply for their luxurious and extravagant toilet (Isa. iii. 16-26), now aspired to be leaders of the people, and claimed, like the Pythian priestesses of Delphi, and the Sibyls of Italy, to deliver oracles from God.<sup>1</sup> It may well be that these were conspicuous among the votaries of the Queen of Heaven, or the worshippers of Thammuz; it is possible that they were as active among

"absurdity," or "foolishness," for the reading of the Authorized Version. That meaning, which we find in Lam. ii. 14, may well have grown out of the primary significance of the word, just as the "whited sepulchre" of Matthew xxiii. 27, and the "whited wall" of Acts xxiii. 3, have become common phrases for hypocrisy. The common rendering has, at all events, the support of the LXX., Vulg., Luther, and most Hebrew lexicographers. What was probably before the prophet's mental eye was a loose rubble wall, smeared with a thin coat of mud, and that whitewashed.

<sup>1</sup> I reject as an utterly untenable interpretation, Keil's view that Ezekiel is still speaking of the false prophets, representing them as weak, time-serving, and effeminate, after the fashion of the Homeric: "Achæan women ye, Achæan men no more" (*Il.*, ii. 235).



the exiles in Mesopotamia as they had been in Jerusalem. Ezekiel describes them with a keen incisive vividness; but the details of that description depend mainly on two words (those rendered in our Bibles by "pillows" and "kerchiefs") which are not found elsewhere, and the meaning of which is consequently conjectural. It is obvious that the prophet paints something which was eminently characteristic of the pretensions of these soothsayers, and therefore we can hardly find in the "cushions" or "pillows," and in the "kerchiefs" or "caps," only the appliances of female luxury, like the articles named in Isaiah's catalogue (Isa. iii. 16-26). Still less tenable is the view (Keil's) that the words are figurative; that the "pillows" are the wrappings with which they sought to stay the action of the hands of God, and the "kerchiefs" those which were used to protect the heads of the guilty from his chastisements, or to blind their eyes to the tokens of his judgments.<sup>1</sup> I incline, rather, to Ewald's view, that both the words point to the distinctive dress worn by the prophetesses and by those whom they employed, women or children, of "every stature," in their divining processes. The "cushion" may, on this hypothesis, have been some kind of bandage, or perhaps a magic mirror, worn as a charm or phylactery under the elbow, and the "kerchief," a mantle thrown over the head and falling to the ground, giving a kind of fantastic solemnity to the wearer. Arrayed in these vestments, they entered, almost as the harlot entered on her work, on their evil task, for "handfuls of barley and for pieces of silver" as the "rewards of divination" (Num. xxii. 7; 1 Sam. ix. 7); and in that work they were guilty of a twofold wrong. They "hunted," i.e. persecuted the souls of God's people. They took, as birds are taken in a net<sup>2</sup> (Prov. vii. 23), the souls of those

<sup>1</sup> Keil, taking the rendering "all joints of my hands," for the "all arm-holes" of the Authorized Version.

<sup>2</sup> The words rendered "to make them fly," seems intended to describe the fluttering of birds ensnared.

who came trusting in them with a blind credulity. They, as far as in them lay, were slayers of the souls of those whom God would have to live. They promised life to those who by Him were appointed unto death. They made the hearts of the righteous sad whom He had not made sad. They strengthened the hands of the wicked that he should not turn from his wickedness and live. And therefore Jehovah was against them and the accursed symbols of their calling. He would tear their "wrappings" and their "mantles," and would release the souls that had been ensnared by them. They should know that He was indeed the Lord, and should no more see vanity nor divine divinations.

It was apparently as the result of this protest that there came the next occasion of the prophet's work. Certain of the elders of Israel came before him, as if recognizing his commission from Jehovah, to enquire of the Lord by him. It might have seemed that this was the kind of homage which would have proved acceptable. To him, however, it was far otherwise, for they came with a divided allegiance, seeking to combine the incompatible. They enquired of the Lord, while at the very time they were secretly or openly, in heart or in act, idolaters. To such as these the messenger of Jehovah would give no answer, or an answer "according to the multitude of their idols," which would be none, or worse than none. If the prophet to whom they came suffered himself to be persuaded, *i.e.* "deceived" by them, so as to speak even one word in answer to their enquiries, that word would be no true oracle from God. He would work out the righteous punishment of the hypocrisy of the enquirer and the weakness of the prophet, by sending on them a strong delusion. Once more, as in the terrible parable of 1 Kings xxii. 22, there should be a "lying spirit" in the mouth of the prophet, precipitating the doom of destruction for himself and those with whom he had

complied. To this warning the prophet yielded. He would not speak smooth things or prophesy deceits. Rather had he to speak words that went as arrows to their mark. It had been said of old that the presence of ten righteous men would avail to save a city, guilty as Sodom was, from destruction (Gen. xviii. 32). He had to declare that Judah and Jerusalem were so deeply sunk in evil that though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters by their righteousness, but should deliver their own souls only from the four sore judgments of the sword and the famine, the noisome beast and the pestilence which were now to be sent upon it (Ezek. xiv. 12-22). The choice of the three representative examples of righteousness is every way remarkable: Noah belonged to the patriarchal age, and was "a just man and perfect in his generations, and walked with God" (Gen. vi. 9), and yet he had delivered those of his own household only, while those among whom he lived were swept away by the waters of the flood. Daniel<sup>1</sup> was the living pattern of Israelite holiness of knowledge and wisdom and unstained purity (Dan. i. 4, 17), and his prayers were, perhaps, thought of as having availed to save his three friends from the burning fiery furnace (Dan. iii. 17, 18); and it might well be that the exiles were trusting in his influence with Nebuchadnezzar as likely to be exercised to save Jerusalem from destruction. Job, representing the purer form of Semitic religion prior to, or outside the limits of, the Mosaic Covenant, had been "perfect and upright, fearing God and eschewing evil" (Job i. 1), and yet his children had perished, his wife only being still left to him; but even the aggregate righteousness of the three would be powerless to stay the impending doom of Judah. The awfulness of that sentence was, however, tempered by

<sup>1</sup> The mention of Daniel's name as the representative of wisdom, in Ezekiel xxviii 2, is noteworthy, as shewing the impression which he made on his contemporaries.

the thought which Ezekiel had inherited from Isaiah and other earlier prophets (Isa. i. 9 ; vi. 13), that the continuity of the life of Israel should not be cut off for ever, that the promises of God should not come utterly to an end. In that "remnant of sons and daughters" (some there were to be saved, but it would be by the everlasting compassion of Jehovah, not by the righteousness of Daniel or Jeremiah, or any other of their countrymen) there was the hope of the future. They, as the true Israel of God, should vindicate his ways to man, unsearchable and past finding out though those ways might be. Ezekiel almost anticipates the language of St. Paul as he thought of the apostasy of the Israel of his time, and of its ultimate restoration. "They shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings ; and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. xiv. 22, 23). When Jeremiah had represented the many nations that gazed on the ruined and desolated city as asking, "Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city?" he had been content to give the answer, that its fall was the righteous judgment of its sins, "Because they have forsaken the covenant of their God, and worshipped other Gods and served them" (Jer. xxii. 8, 9). It was given to Ezekiel to see that the purpose of God working through that terrible chastisement was one of an everlasting mercy. Here also it would be seen that it was true of nations as of individual men, that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. xii. 6 ; Prov. iii. 11, 12.)

In the parable that follows in Chapter xv. we have to read between the lines. The prophet found, we must believe, that his people were building a false confidence on the thought of their election. Israel was the vine brought out of Egypt. It had spread its branches to the river (Ps. lxxx. 8). For the present the vineyard was laid waste, as

Isaiah had foretold it would be (Isa. v. 6). But would not Jehovah visit the vine and the branches which his right hand had planted? Should not the "boar out of the wood" and "the wild beast of the field," the Chaldean and barbarian hosts, be driven out of it and put to rout? Those who thus reasoned with themselves had to be reminded that the vine which bore no fruit, brought forth only wild grapes, was more utterly worthless than any of the trees of the forest. It did not supply material, as other trees did, for any useful work. Not even a peg on which to hang the vessels of household use could be made out of its branches (comp. Isa. xxii. 23 and Zech. x. 4 for the similitude). What remained but that the tree, already half-consumed with fire, should be left till the work of destruction was completed? The sentence passed upon the degenerate vine was that it should be utterly consumed, as the barren fig-tree in our Lord's teaching (the one parable being, it need hardly be said, the counterpart of the other): "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" (Luke xiii. 7). In this instance, however, there was no vine-dresser to plead, as it were, for an arrest of judgment. The probation of Israel was so far complete, and the sentence was to take its course. All that remained for the prophet's comfort was the hope, implied in what had preceded, and in the still more elaborate parable which was to follow, that even from that charred and blackened stump there might yet spring forth a shoot which should grow up, and become the vine of the future, bearing its rich purple clusters, and making glad the heart of man with the wine of its vintage. (Comp. Isa. vi. 13, x. 34, xi. 1.)

The more elaborate parable which follows, which, with its terrible counterpart in Chapter xxiii., is the longest example of that form of teaching in Hebrew literature, will call for notice in a separate paper.

E. H. PLUMPTRE,

## THE GOSPEL TO THE GREEKS.

John xii. 20-36.

### IV.—THE PREDICTION.

*“ And I, if I be lifted from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”* (Verse 32.)

THESE sacred words are so familiar to us that in all probability they no longer leave a sharp and vivid impression on our minds, although, however often we read or listen to them, we can hardly fail to be conscious of a certain greatness in them and a certain grace. Taken in their general connection, they are evidently a supreme illustration of that law of *life by death* which our Lord had been enforcing; they remind us that He Himself was about to obey, as He always had obeyed, the law which He had just affirmed to be an inevitable condition of discipleship—to save his life by losing it, to die that He might bring forth much fruit, to pass, by the way of the Cross, to the eternal home of the spirit, to humble Himself that He might be exalted. And, taken thus even, the words are full of power, full of pathetic appeal; for who ever flung away his life so generously as He, or saved it so nobly, inasmuch as He saved not Himself alone, but the whole world? Or from whose death has there ever sprung a harvest so fruitful, so vast, and so enduring?

I. But it is when we come to consider the words in themselves, and in their more immediate context, that we catch some glimpse of the full orb of their meaning; for then we see that they contain, not a single prophecy, but a fourfold prediction. They predict (1) the death of the Cross; but they also predict (2) the ascension into heaven. They predict (3) the extension of the kingdom of God from the Jewish to the Gentile world; but they also predict (4) the final triumph of good over evil throughout the universe. If, therefore, the Gentiles received but one prophecy directly

from the lips of Christ, we may at least say of it that it is *one* which includes *all*, one which sums up the whole series of visions vouchsafed whether to Hebrew or to Christian seers.

(1) These words predict, first of all, *the death of the Cross*, though, instead of parading, they veil and extenuate its horrors; speaking of it as a "mere lifting up from the earth," and so making the Cross itself an instrument of elevation rather than an implement of torture and shame. Now we do not always recognize the prophetic power displayed by our Lord Jesus in foretelling "by what manner of death he should die." He had long known that the Jews would put Him to death. It needed no prophet to forecast *that* perhaps, when once their bitter enmity had been aroused; for which of the servants of God had they not rejected and slain? But *crucifixion* was not commonly inflicted, even by the Romans, except on traitors or slaves; while, among the Jews, an apostate, an offender against the sanctity of the Temple or the authority of the Law, was stoned. There was, therefore, an indubitable element of prediction in our Lord's habitual foreboding that He should be "crucified," that He should be lifted up to bear our sins in his own body on the tree.

(2) Nor was it only his crucifixion which He foretold. Behind and beyond that shameful elevation, He saw a glorious ascension into heaven. Literally rendered, his words run, not "if I be lifted up *from* the earth," but "if I be lifted up *out of*, or *above*, the earth"; and in this peculiar phrase, whatever its first intention may have been, all the great critics find a reference to his resurrection from the dead and his assumption to the right hand of God, as well as to the peculiar manner of the death by which He was to glorify God. There is here, therefore, a splendid example of his faith in the love and justice of his Father, and of his prophetic insight into his Father's will. Must not He have been in very deed a Seer who could foretell an

event so improbable, so incredible to human wisdom, as that One who was so soon to perish on the cross of a slave should rise from the grave in which they laid Him, and ascend the throne of the universe? Must not He have been a veritable prophet who could foresee that death, so far from putting a period to his life, would but enhance the power of his life, and that the obloquy of the Cross, instead of making Him of no reputation, would only minister to and swell his glory?

He who predicted his own death, then, and even the manner of his death, also predicted his triumph over death, and his ascension into heaven; and if the former prediction indicated but a comparatively low measure of the prophetic energy, it must be admitted that in the latter we have a splendid and illustrious proof of his prophetic foresight and energy. Yet even this latter prediction pales before the glory of those that follow it. For our Lord proceeds to foretell the results of his death, and of his triumph over death, the effects of his being lifted up *from* the earth, and of his being lifted up *out of* and beyond the earth.

(3) One result will be, He says, that He will draw *all* men, without distinction of race—both the Jews who had rejected Him and the Gentiles who were ignorant of Him—unto Himself. And what could have seemed more improbable, more incredible than that? Who but He could have seen in the crucifixion of a Galilean peasant, against whom the whole world, Hebrew and heathen, had conspired, the signal of a religious revolution which should cover the whole world, and lift and bind its scattered and hostile races into one new and perfect manhood?

When these Greeks came to Him, when He learned that they had “decided” to cast in their lot with Him, He saw in them the ambassadors of all the Gentile races, and exclaimed, “Now is the Son of man glorified!” for it was his “glory” to be the Saviour not of one nation only, but of all



nations. We have grown so familiar with this "glory" of his that we do not easily realize either how much that incident must have meant for Him, or how much the inclusion of Greeks in his kingdom involved. The whole set of his time was against any such inclusion. The whole course of history had been against it for two thousand years. Through all those centuries God had had an elect people to whom, to whom exclusively, He had confined the direct and immediate disclosures of his will. Was this Divine habit to be changed all in a moment? Could it be that the unique grace so long shewn to the Jews was now to be extended to all mankind? True, God had elected Israel only that Israel might be his minister to mankind, only that in the seed of Abraham He might store up a blessing for all the families of the earth. True, too, that our Lord Himself had never called Himself "Son of Abraham," or "Son of David," though He had not flatly rejected these names when they were conferred upon Him, but had only suggested the qualifications without which they would be inadmissible (John viii. 58; Matt. xxii. 43-45); but, as if with some prevision of the universality of his mission, had habitually called Himself "the Son of man," i.e. the Son of Humanity at-large, from the first. But, in the pride of its election, Israel had long forgotten the end for which it was elected. And, as we have seen, there had been a time even in the public ministry of the Son of Man when He Himself had thought that He was not sent "save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and had learned with joy and wonder, from the generous and immutable faith of a poor Syrophenician woman in the all-embracing love of God, that even the Gentile dogs under the table of Israel might at least eat of the crumbs which fell from a table so bountifully spread.

Now a conviction so ancient, so deeply rooted and widely spread, as this belief in the incommunicable immunities and

privileges of the elect people, was not to be lightly shaken, however high the authority and however noble the spirit in which it was assailed. If we would measure its strength and inveteracy we must mark how long it resisted even the authority of Christ Himself, and held out against the power and the pleadings of the very Spirit of God. When Peter was convinced that no man was common or unclean, and therefore that no man, or caste, or race could any longer claim special and exclusive privilege in the kingdom of God or any Divine election save an election to serve their fellows, he found it no easy task to convert the Church, or even his brother apostles, to his own new faith in the universal love of God. Some of the apostles—James, for instance—were never more than half converted to it. A large section of the primitive Church—the Hebraists, as they were called—were never converted to it at all, but made the life of the Apostle to the Gentiles bitter to him by their uncompromising hostility to the new generous Gospel he preached. Nay, it may be doubted whether half, and the larger half, of the Christian Church has been converted to it to this day: for how can *they* be said to believe in the Love which holds no man common and therefore no man sacred, no man unclean and therefore no man clean, who pride themselves either on an election unto life from which the bulk of their fellows are excluded, or on possessing, even if they do not themselves pertain to it, a sacred priestly caste which alone can mediate between earth and Heaven and bring men near to God?

All the more wonderful was it that, in the face of this ancient and potent tradition—this claim to be in some way dearer to God than “the rest,” which seems to live in our very blood—the Lord Jesus should predict, even before He died, “I, if I be lifted up, will draw *all men* unto myself,” without distinction of race or caste or function. If, for our sins, the prophecy is only fulfilled in part even yet, we

can only the more admire the penetrating prophetic glance which could look through long centuries to a time still to come, when all the world shall recognize its equal and common humanity, and rejoice in the Love which embraces and redeems us all.

(4) Even yet, however, we have not exhausted this marvellous prediction, have not followed it out to its full scope. For just as behind the death of the Cross Jesus saw the resurrection and ascension into heaven, so behind and beyond the extension of his kingdom from the Jews to the whole Gentile world, he foresaw, and foretold, the final triumph of good over evil.

When He had heard the great voice out of heaven which assured Him that, as God had glorified Him in his work among the Jews, so also He would glorify Him again in his still greater work among the Gentiles, He cried, "Now is a judgment" (*i.e.* "There is now a judicial crisis") "of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out;" while in the next breath He adds, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Myself." Evidently, therefore, He implies a contrast between Himself and the Prince of this world, and their several destinies.

Who, then, is this Prince? "Prince of this world" was a recognized Jewish title for Satan whom, in their pride of place and election, they regarded as the god and ruler of the Gentile world, in contradistinction to Jehovah, whom they regarded as *their* King alone. And there was sufficient truth in this conception to warrant our Lord in adopting it, though we may be sure that He held God to be the Lord and King of all men, and not of the Jews only. For if "devil" be but "evil" written large, if Satan be the personification of, or the name we give to, the Principle of Evil, then a world so grossly wicked as was the civilized world of antiquity, may be very truly said to have been under his dominion.

It is this evil Prince, or Principle, of whose downfall from the seat of power Jesus finds a signal in the extension of his kingdom to the Gentiles. It is this Prince whom He Himself is destined to replace. Jesus Himself will henceforth be the Lord and Ruler of the Gentiles, in the same sense in which the Jews had held Jehovah to be their Lord and Ruler. But though He is to displace the Prince of this world, He will not be, as the Jews expected Him to be, only another and a better Prince of the world. He is to be lifted out of, and above, the world. To Him the elevation to the cross—the throne of love, is but an emblem of his elevation to heaven—the throne of power. From thence He will *draw* men, draw them by the sweet and healthy influences, by the gentle compulsions, of the love He has shewn for them and revealed to them, until at last they shall “all” come to Him, and be changed into his image, clothed with his righteousness, crowned with his glory. And this word, “*all* men,” is not to be limited in any way by our poor conceptions of what his love and power can do. It does not mean simply—as even Dr. Westcott, one of our most learned and orthodox commentators, confesses—that He will draw Gentiles as well as Jews; but that He will draw *all* Jews and *all* Gentiles unto Himself. It means nothing less than St. Paul means when, having just charged the Jews with their long rebellion against God, and the Gentiles with their long and hardy violation of his laws, he nevertheless concludes that “*the fulness of the Gentiles*” shall be brought into the kingdom of heaven, and that “*all Israel shall be saved* ;” what he means when he also affirms that God has convicted all men of disobedience only “that He may have mercy on all.”

So that the scope of this great prediction is very wide. It is charged with the music of an eternal hope. It presses on through century after century, age after age, unfulfilled, or only fulfilled in part, and never tires nor rests until it

closes in the full diapason of a redeemed humanity, a regenerated universe. It conducts us from the travail of the Cross to that supreme moment when, seated on the throne of an universal dominion, Christ shall "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."

II. Thus far, then, it has been our endeavour to bring out the immense scope of this prediction, to shew how far it reaches, how much it contains and involves. And though it would be easy to say much more on a theme so vast, perhaps enough has been said to give some inkling of the weight and variety of its contents. But in this prediction an argument is implied which has still to be indicated, however slightly and imperfectly.

We cannot read the verse attentively without asking, What was there in the lifting up of Christ to produce results so vast and so far-reaching as those which He foresees from it and foretells? In reply to that question, we point out, (1) that there is a kind of parable in the words themselves, very simple, indeed, but very suggestive. Christ was *lifted up*, that He might be the better seen; He was raised above the crowd of men, that the crowd might gaze upon Him. He was lifted up *on the cross*, that men might see how much He was willing to do and to bear for them. He was lifted up *into heaven*, that He might be able to bear and to do still more for them. Lifted up above all men by the tragic splendour of his death, lifted still higher by the victorious splendour of his resurrection from the dead, He commands at least the attention, if not the homage, of the whole world.

(2) Before He could hope to draw *all* men to Himself, He must lose the local, the Jewish, form He wore, and assume the form of the perfect, the universal, man; Jesus of Nazareth must be shewn to be the Christ of God. So long as He remained a Jew, a son of Abraham, a son of David, after the flesh, He might be, but He could hardly

be recognized as, in very deed the Son of *Man*. So long as He wore flesh about Him, He could only be seen, heard, felt by as many as gathered round Him, beheld his works, listened to his words. Before He could become a quickening Spirit to the whole human race, He must be released from all these local and national limitations, and assume a form of being which would bring Him at least as near to every man as He was to the citizens of Jerusalem or the peasants of Galilee; a form of being which would make Him as present (and a thousandfold more vital and potent) to the men of every age, as He had been to the men of his own generation. And it was only by dying in the flesh, and rising in the spirit, and carrying his glorified humanity to the throne of heaven, that He could break away from all these local bonds, all these temporal limitations, and shew Himself to be the Lord and Saviour of all.

(3) The rejection of Jesus by the main body of the Jews, of "his own" to whom He came, seems to have been a necessary condition of the deposition of the elect Israel from its pride of place and privilege; while his acceptance by his Jewish disciples and by representatives of the great Gentile world seems to have been a necessary condition of the fulfilment of the great promise to Abraham and his seed, that, in them, all the families of the earth should be blessed, the natural and ordained means of carrying forth that blessing into and throughout the world at large.

(4) But, of course, the great argument in this passage is, that in the Cross we have the revelation of a Love too large and divine to be confined to one race, or even to one world. If in the lifting up of Christ from the earth on the tree we have, as we believe and know that we have, the crowning disclosure and proof of the redeeming love of God for man, of a Love which could be alienated by no sin and would not alter even "where it alteration found," a Love that would stop at no sacrifice by which men could be reconciled to

the Father against whom they had sinned, and brought back to their life in Him, then, surely, the Lord Jesus might well hope that, by revealing such a love as this—a love so generous, so free, so pathetic, so divine—He should draw all men to Himself; and by drawing them to Himself draw them back to his Father and our Father, to his God and ours.

And (5) when He was lifted up not only *from*, but *out* of the earth, when He, who died by and for our sins, was raised from the dead, raised into heaven, was He not declared to be the Son of God *with power*? Did not the God who raised Him up set his seal of approval to his atoning and reconciling work? Did He not authenticate the revelation of forgiving and renewing love which Christ had made, and avow that love to be his own? But if in very deed God so loved us as to give his Son to die for us, that by the power of his death we might be quickened into our true and eternal life, and if that love did not cease at the Cross, but still sheds down its quickening and renewing influences from heaven, ought not that love to reach its end? Can a love, "so amazing, so divine," fail to reach its end? Must not every man, sooner or later, see and feel that love? And can any man who really sees and feels it, any man who really believes that God so loved *him*, fail to be "draw'n" by it, and to respond to it?

On the whole, then, I do not see how any man is to study this Gospel to the Greeks, to reflect on what is conveyed and implied in the Parable, the Paradox, the Promise, and the Prediction of which it is composed, without acknowledging that it contains "infinite riches in little room;" that into these four brief sentences the Lord Jesus has compressed the whole substance of the Gospel which He preached at large among the Jews, all that is essential whether to faith, to hope, or to charity.

S. Cox.

*THE GROWTH OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE  
RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AMONG  
THE JEWS.*

V. WE may now proceed to examine the writings which have reached us from the period intervening between Malachi and the Christian era, many of which are found translated in the Anglican version of Holy Scripture under the general name of *The Apocrypha*.

The First Book of Esdras and some other of these documents offer nothing to our purpose.

The Second Book of Esdras, which until late years was known to us only in the form of the Old Latin version, was most probably written in the middle of the century preceding the Christian era; at any rate it is a genuine product of Jewish thought; and, when the interpolations of Christian hands are eliminated, must be regarded as the composition of an Alexandrian Hebrew who held firmly to the faith of his fathers. Appertaining to so late a period, we should naturally expect to find in this Book more definitiveness with regard to the doctrine of the Resurrection than we discover in earlier documents. And this indeed is the case. Thus we are told (vii. 32): "The earth shall restore those that are asleep in her, and so shall the dust those that dwell in silence, and the secret places<sup>1</sup> shall deliver those souls that were committed unto them." And Chap. iv. 41, 42: "In Hades (in inferno) the chambers of souls are like unto the womb; for as a woman that travaileth maketh haste to escape the necessity of the travail, even so do these places hasten to deliver those things which from the beginning were committed unto them." So the writer speaks (Chap. vii.) of the day of judgment being the end of this time and the beginning of immortality; of man being promised an immortal time and an everlasting hope and dwellings of

<sup>1</sup> Promptuaria. The same word is used in the next quotation.



health and safety and a paradise whose fruit endureth for ever, wherein is security and medicine. "This is the life," he proceeds (ver. 59), "whereof Moses spake while he lived, saying unto the people, 'Choose thee life that thou mayest live.'"

In the Second Book of Maccabees (160 B.C.), which is the work of a fanatical Jew dwelling probably at Alexandria, the doctrine of the Resurrection is stated without reserve. The good confession witnessed by the Seven Brethren, narrated in the seventh chapter, is supported by the hope of the future life. Thus the second brother, at his last gasp, addressing Antiochus, cries: "Thou, O persecutor, takest us out of this present life; but the King of the world will raise us up, who have died for his laws, unto an everlasting re-awakening of life (*εἰς αἰώνιον ἀναβίωσιν ζωῆς ἡμᾶς ἀναστήσει*, ver. 9)" And the fourth: "It is good, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to be raised up again by him" (ver. 14). And the mother of these heroes comforted them with the expectation of the life beyond the grave. "Doubtless," she says, "the Creator of the world will of his mercy give you back again both breath and life, as ye now regard not your own selves for his laws' sake" (ver. 23). "Fear not this tormentor," she said to her youngest son, the last to suffer, "but, proving thyself worthy of thy brethren, take thy death, that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren" (ver. 29).

So assured and prominent had this doctrine become in Maccabean times, that it had led to the practice of prayer for the dead—a practice still used in Jewish synagogues. Thus Judas on a certain occasion having collected two thousand drachmas of silver, sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering,<sup>1</sup> "doing," as the writer adds, "very well and

<sup>1</sup> προσάγειν περὶ ἀμαρτίας θύσας, xii. 43. What Judas' purpose was is not clear—whether he meant the sacrifice to be offered for the dead or the living. The Vulgate solves the difficulty by paraphrasing boldly: "Offerri pro peccatis mortuorum sacrificium." The writer's opinion is plain enough.

honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection ; for if he had not expected that they who were untimely slain would rise again, it would have been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for them that godly slept in death, it was a holy and good thought. Wherefore he made the reconciliation for the dead that they might be delivered from sin" (xii. 43-45). It seems that on the bodies of the slain had been found things consecrated to idols, and the people believed that they owed their death to this infringement of the law. Hence Judas, according to his historian, offered prayer and sacrifice that this sin might be forgiven them in the other world. The reflection added by the writer seems to indicate that he had in view some special opponents, probably Sadducees, who denied the doctrine of the Resurrection. The story of Razis (xiv. 37-46) shews this hope of future life as animating a man even at the moment of self-destruction. Razis was an elder of Israel, a patriot, and a person of good reputation. To seize and to put him to death, Nicanor sent a large body of troops, and Razis, seeing no hope of escape, chose rather to die manfully by his own hands than to be abused and dishonoured by his enemies. Having in his haste failed to inflict a mortal wound upon himself with his sword, he leaped from the wall into the midst of the soldiers who were thirsting for his blood. And there sorely wounded and bleeding to death, as the narrator says, "When as his blood was now quite gone, he plucked out his bowels, and taking them in both his hands, he cast them upon the throng, and calling upon the Lord of life and spirit to restore him those again, he thus died." That the spirit-world was not peopled with shadows, which had no thought of the past or interest in the present, is evident from the dream of Judas which he relates for the encouragement of the brethren (xv. 11-16). He sees Onias holding up his hands

and praying for the people; and then appears Jeremiah, "a man with gray hairs, and exceeding glorious, who was of a wonderful and excellent majesty . . . who prayeth much for the people and for the holy city." And Jeremiah gives Judas a golden sword wherewith he should smite the enemy. This dream, which the narrator considers worthy of credit (*ἀξιόπιστον*), could only have inspired the hearers with confidence from their full belief in the reality and efficaciousness of the intercession of their forefathers in the other world, and their conviction that the departed were conscious of their doings and were allowed to aid them, if not in any material fashion, at any rate by their prayers.

It must be observed that the belief in a future state of reward and punishment did not necessarily imply a belief in the resurrection of the body.<sup>1</sup> The eschatology of the author of the Book of Wisdom contains no trace of the latter doctrine, while it is copious on the subject of retribution. What the sensualist says (Wisdom ii. 1) on this point is also the writer's own opinion: "In the death of man there is no remedy, and there hath not been known one who returned from the grave;" for he himself affirms further on (xvi. 14): "Man killeth man, but he bringeth not back the spirit when it has gone forth, no, nor releaseth the soul received in the other world." His notion seems to be that judgment immediately succeeds death. The ungodly are plunged into darkness without hope of relief, deprived of the light of God's presence, yet conscious of what they have lost, and suffering torment; while the righteous live for evermore with God in rest and happiness, and receive a high reward, a glorious kingdom and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand.<sup>2</sup>

Ecclesiasticus, as the work of a more or less pronounced

<sup>1</sup> This is plain from Greek and Roman mythology.

<sup>2</sup> See additional note on Wisd. i. 13, p. 117, in my edition, if I may be permitted to refer to it.

Sadducee, has nothing to say of the life beyond the grave ; and other writers of this period people Hades, as did Virgil, with mere shades. Their teaching may be thus summarized.<sup>1</sup> (1) The souls of all men, good and bad, retain their personality after death, and are conscious of their former state and actions. (2) Suffering and labour undergone for righteousness' sake secure a happy future ; but the wicked will meet with sure punishment. (3) The good will enjoy the greatest happiness, which is not like that of earth, but can be expressed only by metaphors drawn from earthly joy. (4) This happiness, and the punishment of the evil, will be awarded at a certain definite time when the final judgment will take place. Siracides, when he mentions Hades, regards it rather as the grave than as the dwelling-place of different souls ; or where he seems to people it with disembodied spirits, these are mere shades without life or action. " Give, and take, and sanctify thy soul," are his words (xiv. 16) ; " for there is no seeking of dainties in Hades." " Who shall praise the most High in the grave, instead of them which live and give thanks ? Thanksgiving perisheth from the dead, as from one that is not " (xvii. 27, 28). Even where in his historical reminiscences he is constrained to mention the translation of Enoch and the rapture of Elijah, he regards these circumstances as abnormal and extraordinary ; he does not speak of the two as ascending to heaven or being taken to God, nor draw from their case any lesson of the immortality of the soul or the Resurrection.

The case is much the same in other parts of the apocryphal writings which have been preserved. The care taken by Tobit in burying the dead seems to have been wholly unconnected with any idea of the Resurrection of the body. He is actuated by that kindly feeling which evoked the injunction in Ecclesiasticus (xxxviii. 16) : " My

<sup>1</sup> Flügel, *Geschichte d. Glaub. an Unsterblichkeit*, vol. i. p. 221.

son, let tears fall down over the dead, and begin to lament, as if thou hadst suffered great harm thyself; and then prepare his body according to his station, and neglect not his burial." It was a very different view which caused in mediæval times the burial of the dead to be regarded as one of the seven corporal acts of mercy. But the Greek version of the Book of Tobit affords very slight token of any belief in the survival of the soul after death. It is true that in the Vulgate Latin version, when Tobit's relations mock at him for the fruitlessness of his acts of charity, he answers (ii. 17, 18): "Nolite ita loqui, quoniam filii sanctorum sumus, et vitam illam expectamus quam Deus daturus est his qui fidem suam nunquam mutant ab eo." But it is very doubtful what he means by "that life"; and at any rate the passage has nothing to correspond to it in the original texts which have reached us, and can only be regarded as an interpolation. The genuine doctrine is seen in such places as iii. 6: "Command my spirit to be taken from me that I may be dissolved<sup>1</sup> and become earth . . . command that I may be delivered out of this distress, and go into the everlasting place;" that is, he prays that God would receive back the spirit which He had given to him, and that his body might rest in the grave. That nothing more is meant by "the everlasting place" is confirmed by Psalm xlviii. 12, and Eccles. xii. 5, where the grave is called *οἰκίαι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα* and *οἶκον αἰῶνος*. He may not have held that the soul perished with its earthly receptacle, but he certainly deprives it of individual existence, and considers that it possesses no longer personality or powers of thought and action.<sup>2</sup>

VI. In Judith there is a passage which seems to imply belief in punishment after death: "Woe to the nations that

<sup>1</sup> ἐπίταξον ἀναλαβεῖν τὸ πνεῦμά μου ὅπως ἀπολυθῶ, which may mean merely "that I may be dismissed" i.e. from life, as Gen. xv. 2; Luke ii. 29. He continues: ἐπίταξον ἀπολυθῆναι με τῆς ἀνάγκης ἥδη εἰς τὸν αἰῶνιον τόπον.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Eccles. ix. 10.

rise up against my kindred! the Lord Almighty will take vengeance of them in the day of judgment, in putting fire and worms in their flesh; and they shall feel them and weep for ever" (*ἕως αἰῶνος*, xvi. 17). This of course is a reminiscence of Isaiah lxvi. 24, and is parallel with the expression in Ecclus. vii. 17: "Humble thy soul greatly; for the vengeance of the ungodly is fire and worms." It seems to have become a common metaphor for extreme suffering and indignity, and may in some connexions mean no more than that the flesh of enemies should become the prey of fire or worms, even as the horrible deaths of Antiochus and Herod Agrippa are described in similar terms.<sup>1</sup> If we consider the expression as a rhetorical exaggeration, we must also conclude that the idea of the body being capable of suffering in another world was not altogether repugnant to the Jewish thought, and that hence the punishment was spoken of as eternal.

In the Second Book of Baruch<sup>2</sup> and the First and Third of Maccabees there is nothing said about the Resurrection of the dead. The Pseudo-Baruch, who wrote in the second century B.C., speaks in glowing words of the restoration of Israel and of the glory which should be showered upon her; but he has in view only a temporal prosperity, and the triumph to which he looks forward is one that will meet the people in this life and in their own land. His words however are ambiguous or inconsistent. While commonly he speaks of death as the end of all man's interests and thoughts: "Thou endurest for ever, and we perish utterly" (comp. Ps. cii. 26); "They are vanished and gone down to the grave, and others are come up in their steads" (iii. 3, 19); in another passage (iii. 4) he entreats God to hear the prayers of the dead Israelites (*τῶν τεθνηκότων Ἰσραήλ*), on

<sup>1</sup> 2 Macc. ix. 9; Acts xii. 23. *Fritzsche*, on Judith xvi. 17.

<sup>2</sup> This is the apocryphal Book contained in the Anglican version; the First Book or Epistle is mentioned further on.

which Theodoret remarks, that the writer here plainly teaches the immortality of the soul. It is true that many commentators have taken the words figuratively, explaining them, after Grotius, as intending to signify the Jews in exile, who were virtually dead, like members severed from the body. But in ii. 17 we find the dead spoken of as *οἱ τεθνηκότες ἐν τῷ ᾤδῃ*, and we have seen in the account of the vision of Onias (2 Macc. xv) that the notion that the departed saints prayed for their suffering children was not unknown; we are therefore warranted in taking the above words literally, and that, in spite of the language of ii. 17, which affords a different idea.

The Epistle of Jeremy, which in the Anglican version and in some editions of the Septuagint forms the sixth chapter of Baruch, and which belongs probably to the last century B.C., likewise offers no word concerning the Resurrection. Among the Apocryphal additions to the Book of Daniel the Song of the Three Children contains the verse: "O ye spirits and souls (*πνεύματα καὶ ψυχὰι*) of the righteous, bless ye the Lord; praise and exalt him above all for ever." At first sight it seems obvious that the dead are here addressed, and summoned to magnify Almighty God in the world beyond the grave. Thus Grotius renders "*Spiritus et animæ justorum, nempe quæ sunt in Paradiso*"; nor can we say absolutely that this was not the meaning of the writer. But as in every other place the living are addressed, it seems to be most consistent to consider that they are invoked here also, the terms "spirit and soul" being used to denote the two parts of man's being, his higher and lower nature, in accordance with the trichotomy of man with which the New Testament has familiarized us. (Comp. 1 Thess. v. 23; Heb. iv. 12.) The History of Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon, add nothing to our investigation; the same is true of the Prayer of Manasseh and of the First Book of Esdras, in all of which

however, the mention of the Resurrection has no natural position, and its omission proves nothing with regard to the belief of the writers. In the First Book of Maccabees, however, the opportunities of reference to this doctrine are plainly neglected, thus far confirming the suggestion that the work is the production of a Sadducee who placed reliance on the strong right arm of a valiant man rather than in encouragements from the spirit world or hopes of a future reward. Thus the brave Mattathias, in his dying exhortation to his sons, says nothing of the life to come as a motive for endurance and courage. He reminds them of the deeds of their forefathers and the fame and earthly rewards that repaid their constancy. "Call to remembrance," he says, "what acts our fathers did in their time ; so shall ye receive great honour and an everlasting name . . . ye, my sons, be valiant, and shew yourselves men in the behalf of the law ; for by it shall ye obtain glory" (Chap. ii. 51, 64). The writer, thoroughly acknowledging the Providence of God as overruling the devices and stratagems of the enemy, and the efficacy of prayer in controlling events, has no faith in the continued life of the soul apart from the earthly tenement, and knows nothing of the reunion of the two.

VII. The Third Book of Maccabees, though not found in the Anglican version, nor in the Latin Vulgate, is still read in the Greek Church, and belongs to the last pre-Christian century. Its design is to afford comfort to the Alexandrian Jews in their sufferings for religion's sake ; and the author, in order to serve his object, modifies or invents facts, writing with rhetorical exaggeration and claiming to be historical while probably romancing. Though it might have seemed natural for the moralist to have introduced the topic of Resurrection as a source of comfort in this world's trials and calamities, there is no word about it, nor is mention made of the life beyond the grave. It



is different with the Fourth Book of Maccabees, which however belongs to a later period, and, though it shews no trace of the influence of Christianity, is by many critics referred to the middle of the first century A.D.<sup>1</sup> Written by an Alexandrian Jew, it aims at encouraging the Hebrews to hold fast their faith amid the philosophical heathenism which surrounded them. The author to this end argues concerning the power of the Divine law to control human passions, and illustrates his position by narrating the Maccabean martyrdoms. In describing the deaths of Eleazar and the seven brethren with their mother, he omits all mention of the Resurrection so prominently set forth in the document from which his history is derived: but of the continued existence of the soul, of the life to come, and of the future judgment, he speaks frequently and emphatically. The righteous, those who have observed the Laws of Moses, shall enjoy eternal blessedness in the company of the holy patriarchs and near the throne of God (v. 36, ix. 8, xiii. 16, xvi. 25, xvii. 18, xviii. 23); while the wicked, after the death of the body, will suffer unending torments (*αἰώνιον βασανον*), and wail in pain for ever (ix. 9, x. 15, xii. 14, xiii. 14. Fritzsche). The only allusion to the Resurrection occurs in Chap. xviii. 17, where the writer quotes Ezekiel's words, "Can these dry bones live?" in reference to the future life, but adds no further remark or elucidation, proceeding (verse 18) to cite Moses' hymn to the same effect: "I kill and I make alive" (Deut. xxxii. 39). "This," he explains, "is your life and length of days."<sup>2</sup>

The First Book or Epistle of Baruch has been unaccountably neglected by students. It is found in Syriac and Latin, and was probably written during the second

<sup>1</sup> I should be inclined to assign it to the middle of the last pre-Christian century.

<sup>2</sup> The last section of the Book is written probably by another and a later hand.

century B.C. Fritzsche's opinion that it was the production of a Syrian monk has no manner of support from the document itself.<sup>1</sup> That its author was a Jew is evidenced by the strict admonitions to his readers that they should adhere to the Law of Moses, and transmit the epistle to their children and rehearse it in their solemn assemblies, as well as by the introduction of an Hagadic story in Chap. i. 13-15. The references to a future life are frequent. The author sees the day of judgment near at hand, when every act and thought will be examined (i. 25, 26, 34), comforting his readers with the remembrance of the good things laid up for them which they can win only by patient endurance (i. 37-4, ii. 21 ff). While there is here no actual mention of the Resurrection, the life beyond the grave is so closely realized and the judgment to come is used so emphatically as a moral motive, that it is to be supposed that the author did not conceive the man on whom sentence was to be pronounced as incomplete, but rather as a soul clothed in a body which should share its punishment or reward.

The Book of Enoch cited apparently by Jude (vv. 14, 15), and certainly by Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and other early writers, has been, since the days of Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, known to us in an Ethiopic version.<sup>2</sup> Without enlarging upon its merits, its grandeur, its poetic fervour, we have here merely to note its pre-christian date and to assign Palestine as the home of its author or authors. In this most interesting work the life of the soul in the other world is constantly mentioned, and the doctrine of the Resurrection is plainly stated. But it is not an universal Resurrection which the writer signifies. While the *spirits* of the wicked taken out of Sheol shall suffer punishment, the spirits of the righteous shall be united with their bodies

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Ginsburg's article, *Baruch*, in Kitto's *Cyclop.*

<sup>2</sup> For a good account of this Book, see Pusey, *Lect. on Daniel*, p. 388 ff.

and share the blessedness of Messiah's kingdom. That the resurrection of the body was to be the peculiar privilege of the holy among the Hebrews, is an opinion, which, as we shall see below, was largely prevalent in post-christian times. But this seems to be the earliest mention of it in the apocryphal literature of the old Testament.

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### APHEK AND BETH-DAGON.

IN the Philistine wars which devastated the Land of Promise during the last days of the Judges and the first days of the Hebrew monarchy, few names are more conspicuous than that of APHEK. Here the enemies of Israel were pitched at that great battle when four thousand men of Judah fell on the field, the ark of God was taken, and the sons of Eli were slain. Here, too, it was they mustered afterwards, when the anger of the captains of the different local contingents rose against Achish, their commander-in-chief, for having brought with him such an ally as David the Israelite whom, with his outlaw band, they compelled to return to Ziklag, while they marched on to the plain of Jezreel and encamped before Shunem, on the eve of that day which proved so victorious to themselves but fatal to King Saul. After this period—probably because of the rapidity with which the chosen people retrieved their position and became, under David, a strong nation, with their capital far southwards, first at Hebron, then at Jerusalem—Aphék is no more mentioned in Scripture, and no clue to its whereabouts has been discovered by travellers or found in the works of writers, early or recent, on Bible topography. Yet the identification of it is obviously important to a clear understanding of the history of the period; and it is equally evident that the place must have been one affording considerable natural advantages, or it would never have been chosen as a *rendezvous* by the warlike hosts of the Philistines.

The name itself is not an uncommon one; but, unfortunately, like many another, both ancient and modern, in Palestine, it repeats itself in contiguous localities; a fact which, it is well known, constitutes one of the stumbling-blocks to the Biblical investigator. We read *e.g.* of an Aphek, or Aphekah, in the vicinity of Hebron, in the territory of Judah (Josh. xv. 53, which is probably the same as that named in xii. 18); of another in Asher (Josh. xix. 30, which again probably is that of xiii. 4); of a third in 1 Kings xx. 26, 30, which was a walled city on the way from Syria (of which Damascus was the capital) to Samaria, situated in Ha Mishor, or "the Plain" (ver. 25), and identified with the modern Fik, a village a little east of the Sea of Galilee, in the direct pilgrimage road from Damascus, and still a general halting-place for caravans from that city to Nablus (Sichem), Jerusalem, and Egypt. But the Aphek of our narrative has hitherto been as completely lost to us as has that monolith—the Ebenezer of a nation's gratitude—erected by Samuel between Mizpeh and Shen, in this same war with the Philistines. A recent residence of several years in Palestine and Syria having made me somewhat familiar with the country, I would ask your readers to follow me in a fresh consideration of the indications of the locality in question, in the hope that some reasonably likely site for a place of such natural as well as historical importance may commend itself to us.

Let us, first, glance at the geographical data furnished us in the Bible. Our Aphek was more than two days' journey in a northerly direction from Ziklag, the seat of David's chieftaincy (1 Sam. xxix. 1, 11; and xxx. 1). This place, unfortunately, is not identified, though its approximate whereabouts is indicated. It was situated in the Negeb, or "South Country," below the mountains of Judæa, and must have been somewhere in the vicinity of Beer-Sheba, because in juxtaposition to it in all the lists; it was first assigned to

Judah and then transferred to Simeon, but was always left in the actual possession of the Philistines until given by the king of Gath to David (Josh. xv. 31, xix. 5; 1 Sam. xxvii. 6). It may have been as far south as 'Aşluj, or 'Asluj (twelve miles south of Beer-Sheba), the only place hitherto suggested for its identification.<sup>1</sup> David left Aphek with his small company of hardy followers early in the morning—a thing only done in Palestine in cases of urgency—and under circumstances which, to men of their temperament, would have stimulated their movements, even if they had had no news of an Amalekite invasion of their homes until they reached them. As they did not arrive at the end of their journey until the third day, Aphek could scarcely have been less than fifty miles distant from Ziklag. Aphek, too, was *en route* for Jezreel from Achish's capital at Gath, and within a few hours' run of Shiloh (1 Sam. iv. 1, 12).

Now as the way of the Philistines from Gath to Jezreel would be through Mount Ephraim and by Bethel, the most likely place for their army to gather would be in the vicinity of the passes of Mount Ephraim. Here they would be in a good position to march on to the south-eastern lateral of that great central battlefield of Palestine—the Plain of Esdraelon—where Saul was concentrating his forces, and here they would be able to control or defend the passes through which the various sections of their army must advance under the several “lords of the Philistines.” All the other *data* agree in permitting us to place the site of Aphek in Mount Ephraim, somewhere near where the present road from Jaffa to Jerusalem cuts through it. Such a neighbourhood is generally accepted by modern Scripture geographers. For example, Lord Arthur Hervey, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, in his note on 1 Samuel iv. 1, in the “Speaker's Commentary,” says: “It would be towards the

<sup>1</sup> By a jumble of guesses, for which, I believe, Julius Fürst, the Hebrew lexicographer, is chiefly responsible.

western frontier of Judah, not very far from Mizpeh of Benjamin"; again on 1 Samuel xxix. 1, "Aphek in Mount Ephraim"; and Mr. (now Sir George) Grove, in his article on Aphek in the "Bible Dictionary," observes that it "would be somewhere to the north-west of, and at no great distance from, Jerusalem." Having got thus near, one is surprised that such able scholars did not light upon and identify the exact site.

Who is there that has climbed the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and, as he reached the locality in question, has not been impressed with the natural importance of that conically peaked mountain, over whose massive shoulder he climbs, ere he descends to the little halting-place of Kolônieh in the valley beneath, and thence makes the last ascent to the Holy City? From this vantage ground he has a good view of another conical mountain, standing apparently almost isolated a full mile distant in a south-easterly direction, and crowned by a little village. The mountain on which we stand, too, bears on its higher crest one of those wretched hamlets so common in Palestine, and which often mark places of great historical interest or of ancient beauty (as, for example, at Jezreel and Tirzah); and here among the hovels are a few large old stones, which are doubtless the survival of better things, while on the very apex of the hill is the ruin of a fortress or castle.

The traveller eagerly asks what these two mountains are and were; for points so conspicuous must surely have borne an important part in the country's history.

The southern mountain village, we are told, is Šoba, the ancient Zuph or Ramathaim—Zophim, the birthplace and residence of the Prophet Samuel, and where Saul was chosen and anointed first king of Israel.<sup>1</sup> This fact makes

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. i. 19, 20, ix., and x. 1. The evidence of identity is too elaborate to be given here. Grove adopts the identification in his map of the Holy Land in the new "Atlas of Ancient Geography"; but the merit of proving it belongs to Herr Schick of Jerusalem, whose argument is given in a lecture delivered in

yonder cone glow with interest; albeit the Philistines did not muster at Zuph.

But what of the massive-browed mountain on which we stand? Our guides can only inform us that its peak peers up 2650 feet above the level of the Mediterranean, and 540 feet above the valley of Kolónieh; that it is called *Kaştal*, which is the Arabic form of the Latin *castellum*; that it may have been a strong place of the Crusaders, but probably marks the site of a Roman fortress placed here for the strengthening, or as an outpost, of its Colonia<sup>1</sup> just below, where, it has been said, the customs dues of the Jerusalem traffic were collected. It would serve also for the protection of the road to Jerusalem (from which city it is distant about two hours' military march) and of the passes of Mount Ephraim. This information is all interesting enough; but what was the place *before* the time of the Romans? If they made use of it on account of the advantages of its natural position, it is the more probable that others did so before them. From the time that Rehoboam made his double fence of fortified cities<sup>2</sup> from Hebron to Gath and Lachish, and from Bethlehem to Zorah and Aijalon, the children of Judah would not need to utilize such a place as this *Kaştal*; for Zorah and Aijalon covered the approaches to it; and if these were broken through, "Mount Zion" was of course the central refuge of the nation. But in the-days of Saul things were different; the nation was not organized, nor of course its national defences, and Jerusalem itself was but a Canaanitish city. In point of position and strength, as we have seen, it would have admirably suited for a *rendezvous* of the Philistines, their main force coming from Gath and contingents from Gaza, Ashkelon, the Holy City in 1878, and printed in the Jewish *Jerusalem Year-Book* for 1881 (published at Vienna in 1882).

<sup>1</sup> Kolónieh or Kulóniyeh probably represents the Mozah (Ham-Motsah) of Joshua xviii. 26, and of the Talmud, where willow branches were gathered for the Feast of Tabernacles, and it may be the Koulon or Culon of the Septuagint and Jerome.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. xi. 5 ff.

and Ekron in Judah, and from Beth-Dagon in Dan; while Saul's strength lay in an opposite quarter. With reference to Ziklag, Kaṣtal is forty-five miles from Beer-Sheba in a straight line (and David and his followers would have been able to go down there from here in almost a straight line); it is a little over twenty miles, *i.e.* a very "few hours" distant for one of the military runners, from Shiloh. While its conspicuous position gave it a wide outlook, it was free from any liability to surprise from Beni Israel, and at the same time it guarded its own rear in case retreat became necessary. In fact, in reviewing the circumstances, one feels that if this were not Aphek, it would be a hard matter to find any other place so suitable.

There is no valid reason against our identification, and the probabilities in its favour thus far are exceedingly strong; but the difficulty of change of name remains yet to be faced. In any case this need not be insuperable, especially when we remember that Roman names in Palestine have not infrequently displaced earlier ones, as Cæsarea has supplanted Strato's Tower, and Nablus (the Arabic form of Neapolis) Sichem. But, as a matter of fact, the difficulty vanishes when looked at. The modern name agrees exactly with the old one. Aphek comes from a root meaning "to make strong," and thus signifies "a strong place," "fortress," or "Castellum."

∴ Aphek = Kaṣtal.<sup>1</sup>

The result of the last mustering of the Philistine forces in this place was disastrous and apparently overwhelming to Israel. But "man's extremity is God's opportunity,"

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above, I find that this identification has been briefly proposed by the Rev. W. F. Birch—the sharp-eyed critic of the Palestine Exploration Fund—in the *Quarterly Statement* for 1881, p. 101. The fact that our investigations (which were perfectly independent and unknown to each other) should have led us to the same conclusion is of course a confirmation of its soundness. Indeed, as I have previously remarked, it seems strange that the identification was not made long ago.



and this crushing defeat was, as we know, overruled by "the strategy of Providence" to the recovery, stability, and glory of his people. A fearful incident in the crisis of the disaster, however, we propose now to try and localize.

In 1 Chronicles x. 9, 10 (the narrative of the Chapter is substantially the same as that of 1 Samuel xxxi.), we read that after the Philistines found the corpses of King Saul and his sons on Mount Gilboa, they stripped him, "took his head and his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people. And they put his armour in the house of their gods, and *fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.*"

The "house of their gods," where they hung his armour, was probably some place in the heart of Philistia itself, where such trophies were usually kept (as the Tower of London among us); but the head and body of their fallen enemy were nailed up to the walls of towns in the vicinity of the battle-places, in the land of Israel, which had lately passed, by "the fortunes of war," into the hands of the Philistines. Here the mutilated remains were transfixed—in accordance with the usages of those rough times—as ghastly tokens of the prowess of the conquerors, to strike terror into the hearts of the children of Israel, and leave the Philistines in undisturbed possession of their conquests.

For the fact that many Israelitish cities had been acquired by the enemy during their forty years' oppression, we have not only natural inference, but ample proof, and with reference to this last war it is definitely stated in both copies of the narrative. *E.g.* we read in Samuel that "when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley (*scil.* of Jezreel) . . . saw that the men of (the army of) Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled; *and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.* . . . And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth

Shan." The Chronicler, as we have seen, adds, "and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon."

"The house of Ashtoreth," presumably in Philistia proper, is supposed to have been that at Ashkelon which, according to Herodotus, was afterwards plundered by the Scythians. Beth Shan, or Beth Shean, still exists (the name corrupted into Beisân); it is a modern village with ancient ruins, just on the line where the Plain of Jezreel dips into the Jordan valley, a dozen miles north-east of the modern Jenin, with the village of Gilboa (now Jelbôn) lying between the two places.

We have now to find the third place, viz. "the temple of Dagon," which, whether a locality or an edifice, could not have sprung into existence at the moment of victory, but had survived from the days when the Philistines over-ran the country—the period of 1 Samuel xiii.

What "in the temple of Dagon" means we are helped to understand by turning to the original, where we observe that the Hebrew for the whole phrase is simply בֵּית דָּגוֹן, "Beth-Dagon"; evidently *the name of a place*, which there is no more reason for translating here than in Joshua xv. 41 and xix. 27.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, a different spot from either of these, which are both too much out of the way, the former being in the territory of Judah and lying in "the valley" or Shephelah (Josh. xv. 33), and the latter being in the territory of Asher.

The Beth-Dagon we are in quest of should be either in the immediate neighbourhood of the battle of Gilboa, the region of the triumphs and conquests of the Philistines; or between the scene of that battle and Aphek, their mustering place, which, as we have endeavoured to shew, was the modern Kaṣtal. Is there any site which can be identified with Beth-Dagon in the locality indicated?

<sup>1</sup> A similar mistake is made by the A.V. in Judges xx. 18, 26, 31, and xxi. 2, where the proper name Bethel is translated "house of God."

There is. A spot meeting all the requirements of the test still exists, and bears the very name (in its Arabic form of Beit Dejân) which was given in ages long gone by. Beit Dejân is now a hamlet (and probably never was much more than this), with a few ruins, situated in the Plain of Salim, seven miles east-south-east of Nablus, about twenty-two miles south of Jelbôn, and about thirty miles north of Aphek.

These identifications will, it is hoped, help to give reality and life to an obscure period of Israel's history; a period not without importance and interest for us (as what portion of Bible history can be?), albeit that period of anarchy and confusion with which a national apostasy was visited.

And in Beit Dejân we have another monument discovered to us of the widespread idolatry of ancient Palestine, and another token of its influence among an energetic race, if not of their missionary zeal in promoting it. The terrible fascination of this sin held, as we know,<sup>1</sup> many of the Chosen People in its thrall; and at this very shrine, doubtless many a heart, straying from Jehovah, bowed down and worshipped. The Nemesis was sure. They who had been their teachers in a false religion, marched against and utterly defeated them in battle, and on the very walls of this temple of their god they transfixed the gory head of the first hapless king of Israel, once the pride of his people, but now forsaken of God and man.

W. T. PILTER.

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### THE STONE AND THE ROCK.

Two very interesting papers in the December number of *THE EXPOSITOR* bearing the above title prompt me to attempt another and very different exposition of the words recorded in Matthew xvi. 18 as spoken by Christ. Our task

<sup>1</sup> Judges. x. 6; 1 Sam. vii. 8 and 4, and xii. 10.

is, to search for such thought as, in the mind of Christ, would suitably clothe itself in his recorded words. The method of research must be a grammatical investigation of these words, and of any other words, from Him or from others, bearing upon the same matter.

Somewhere in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, probably in the wild solitudes at the foot of Hermon, Christ asked his disciples generally, "Who say ye that I am?" While others were thinking, Peter replied at once, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*" To the ready speaker Christ turned immediately, and proclaimed him "Blessed;" for his quick reply proved that he had been taught by the Heavenly Father of the Incarnate Son. But the Saviour has yet more to say. Placing Himself in conspicuous contrast (*καγὼ*) to Peter who has just spoken, and singling him out (*σοι λέγω*) from the band of apostles by whom he was surrounded, Christ takes up Peter's own words *Thou art*, and applies them to the speaker: "*Thou art Peter.*"

We are at once reminded of words recorded in John i. 43 as spoken by Christ when Simon was first brought to Him: "Thou shalt be called Cephas." This name the writer of the fourth Gospel explains by adding that it "is interpreted Peter;" meaning probably that this was its current Greek equivalent. The Aramaic name suggests that Christ spoke in that language. Its Hebrew equivalent is found in Jeremiah iv. 29; Job xxx. 6, in the sense of *rock*. And in each of these places it is rendered in the LXX. *πέτρα*; in the former case, however, the distinction between *πέτρα* and *πέτρος* being marked only by the accent. The Aramaic word denotes, I believe, usually a *rock*, sometimes a *stone*. The Greek *πέτρα*<sup>1</sup> is always *rock*: *πέτρος* denotes a *stone*; rarely a *rock*, e.g. Sophocles, *Philoctetes*, l. 272; *Oedipus at Colonus*, ll. 19, 1595. But, since *πέτρα* is feminine, the only

<sup>1</sup> See Rost and Palm's *Lexicon*.

Greek equivalent of **סֵפֶר** available for a man's name was **Πέτρος**. This last rendering is the more suitable because it is not found in the LXX. or New Testament; and only twice<sup>1</sup> in the Apocrypha; and was therefore an almost vacant word waiting for use.

We feel at once that the words of Christ, *Thou art Peter, (Rock or Piece-of-Rock)*, were designed to announce some great honour awaiting the disciple who had so readily and nobly confessed his Master. And, if so, these words need explanation. For **Πέτρος** is not, in itself, a title of honour. Indeed, it is used sometimes (e.g. Sophocles, *King Oedipus*, l. 334; Euripides, *Medea*, l. 28) to denote stolid indifference. Even in Mr. Burton's paper<sup>2</sup> the name is expounded in a sense which makes it by no means a title of honour. His exposition proves how greatly the name given by Christ to Simon needs authoritative explanation. We wait, therefore, to hear in what sense Simon is a Rock or Piece-of-Rock.

Our Lord continues, "*And upon this Rock I will build My Church.*" He thus declares that He is about to call together out of the world a community for Himself, representing this community as a building, Himself its builder; and declares further that in some worthy sense *Upon this Rock*, as a building upon its foundation, the new community shall rest. These words can be no other than Christ's own explanation of the honour conferred on Simon in the foregoing declaration, *Thou art a Piece-of-Rock*. And, that He is still thinking of Peter, is proved by the further words of honour which follow; "*I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatever thou mayst bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.*"

Looking at the sentence as it stands, and without thought of the difficulties involved, our first idea is that **ταύτην τῇ πέτρῃ** refers to Simon, who has just been solemnly declared to be **Πέτρος**. This suggestion is in no wise weakened by

<sup>1</sup> 2 Macc. i. 16, iv. 41.

<sup>2</sup> See vol. vi. page 434.

the different ending of the two words. For *πέτρα* is the usual term for a *rock*, e.g. Matthew vii. 24; Exodus xvii. 6; Numbers xx. 8; and *Πέτρος* is its nearest masculine equivalent, a form rarely used as an independent substantive.

The only serious objection to the above exposition is the difficulty of conceiving that in any sense the Church of Christ was built on Simon Peter. In view of this difficulty it has been suggested that our Lord intended to say that He is Himself the Rock on which He will build his Church. It has been further suggested (see Vol. vi. p. 436) that the transition from Simon to Christ is indicated by the change from *Πέτρος* to *πέτρα*; and this change is compared to the difference between *lightning* and *light*. But both in form and meaning these English words stand much further apart than the Greek words before us. And, as I have just shewn, of these last, the transition from one to the other is easily accounted for without supposing any change of subject. That Christ indicated the transition to Himself as The Rock, by a gesture, is conceivable. But, had there been such, a truthful narrator would have been bound to note it in some way: for, to pass over in silence a gesture which changes completely the reference of the recorded words, is to misrepresent the speaker. A good example of the need of explanation in such cases is found in John ii. 21; where, after recording words of Christ very liable to be misunderstood, the writer adds, "But he spake of the temple of his body." Yet, strange to say, this is quoted (on page 438) as a "complete parallel" to the passage before us; and as "a key which will unlock that other enigma." The comment which the Sacred Writer felt it needful to add, destroys all parallel between the two passages. If the words *Upon this Rock* refer to Christ and not to Simon, about whom emphatically Christ speaks both before and afterwards, they have, as liable to be seriously misunderstood, so far as I know, no parallel in the New Testament.

Again, the infinite difference between Christ and Simon demands that transition from one to the other be marked in some indisputable and conspicuous manner. We should have expected *οὐ ἐὶ Πέτρος, ἀλλὰ Πέτρα*, or the like. Nor can I allow any weight to Dr. Morison's suggestion (see his *Commentary in loco*) that had Christ referred to Simon He would probably have said, "Upon thee I will build my Church"; for the eloquence of repetition we all recognize. Moreover, if Christ spoke in Aramaic, which is very likely, there would be no distinction between the words. Whereas, if He spoke in Greek, the change would still be significant; even referring both words to Simon. Christ declares that he whom men call Piece-of-Rock is really a solid Rock, on which He will build his Church. In any case, the change of termination does not indicate a change of subject, and thus render needless other indication of this all-important transition.

The suggestion that *πέτρα* explains *Πέτρος* by asserting that Simon is related to Christ, as a Piece-of-Rock to the living Rock, does not help us. For, to call Simon a loose piece of rock,<sup>1</sup> falls far below the honour which Christ evidently designed these solemn words to convey.

Moreover, the exposition we are discussing involves an unparalleled confusion of metaphor. In the same words Christ would be represented as both the rock-foundation, and the builder, of the Church. The foundation would build something upon itself. As matter of fact, this is true. But the image is most incongruous. When Christ is mentioned as the foundation, God is the builder; as in 1 Peter ii. 6. In the Bible we frequently find rapid transition from one metaphor to another; and frequently a writer quickly

<sup>1</sup> Most frequently, *πέτρος* denotes a rough piece of rock capable of being thrown. Hence *πέτροισιν ἠδάσσοντο* in Aeschylus, *Persians*, l. 460, Euripides, *Iphigenia at Tauri*, l. 327; *πέτροις λευσθήναι* in Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* l. 435; *καταφρευθήναι πέτροις* in Euripides, *Orestes*, l. 625; also Xenophon, *Anabasis*, bk. iv. 7. 12; *Greek History*, bk. iii. 5. 20, ii. 4. 14.

forsakes his metaphor because it fails him in some important point. But I do not know a passage in which one short clause contains two incompatible metaphors, as would be the case here if the exposition before us were correct.

The insuperable difficulties which surround this explanation therefore drive us back to the simple reference of the words, as they would certainly be understood if we had nothing to guide us but the grammatical form of the sentence. Can we find a meaning which would justify the use of these strange words, and give them a worthy import?

The first thought suggested by these words, to us and probably to the other apostles who heard them, is that Simon was to occupy a unique place in the founding of the Church Christ was about to erect. Upon him in some sense the Church was to rest: and to him were given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Our thoughts go forward to Luke xxii. 31, where our Lord is recorded to say: "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked for *you* (the apostles as a whole) that he may sift *you* as wheat: but I have made supplication about *thee* (for Simon specially) that *thy* faith fail not: and do *thou* (*καὶ σύ*, very emphatic), when once thou hast turned again, *establish* (*στήρισον*) *thy brethren*." These words give to Peter a unique position as an element of stability to his colleagues, as a rock on which they are to rest firmly. The word *ἐπιστρέψας* suggests that Christ had in view Peter's fall, and wished to signify that even this temporary unfaithfulness should not exclude him from the leadership of the apostles. It is also worthy of note that in all lists of the apostles, Peter is mentioned first: so Matthew x. 2; Mark iii. 16; Luke vi. 14; Acts i. 13; and even in the smaller circle noted in Mark v. 37; Matthew xvii. 1, xxvi. 37. All this taken together compels us to look upon Peter as in some sense the leader of the sacred band. We wait to see the position he will occupy when the Master is no longer Himself present.



After the Ascension, it is Peter who rises and suggests the election of another apostle. On the day of Pentecost, Peter, speaking<sup>1</sup> as a mouthpiece of "the Eleven" gives the inaugural address of the Christian Church. To him specially<sup>2</sup> the inquirers spoke and from him received answer.<sup>3</sup> It was Peter<sup>4</sup> who healed the lame man at the Temple gate and preached to the gathered crowd. And it was Peter who, the next day, with unflinching courage refused to be silenced by the threats of the highest court of the Jews. To Peter was made<sup>5</sup> the special revelation that no longer valid were the Mosaic distinctions of meat, and therefore the Mosaic Covenant, of which these distinctions are an essential and conspicuous element. And he first, by the special choice<sup>6</sup> of God, proclaimed the Gospel to Gentiles.

The sermons at Pentecost and to Cornelius introduced the two chief eras in the founding of the Church. By them, certainly, Peter threw open, first to Jews and then to Gentiles, the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven. In them therefore we see fulfilled the commission implied in the gift of the keys.

That "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" are explained in the words which follow, "Whatever thou mayst bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," we have no proof or hint. For, unlike the words "Thou art Peter," the words "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven" are, without further explanation, a mark of infinite honour. Consequently the explanation of them might well be left to events. Nor, again, does the repetition<sup>7</sup> to all the apostles of the following words detract from the unique honour implied in their being first spoken to Peter alone, along with other words spoken only to him.

Let us now return to Peter standing before the Sanhe-

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Verse 37.

<sup>3</sup> Verse 38.

<sup>4</sup> Acts iii. 6, 7, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Acts x. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Acts xv. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew xviii. 18.

drin, as recorded in Acts iv. 8-22. It seems to me that upon Peter's immovable firmness in that day rested the very existence of the infant Church. Peter's daring accusation that his judges, who were the most powerful of the Jews, had murdered the one Hope of Israel, his confident assertion that the murdered One had risen from the dead, and the powerlessness of the threats of his enemies to extract from him a promise of silence, were probably the most potent means of the early and rapid spread of Christianity in Jerusalem. And, assuredly, had Peter's faith failed in that tremendous trial, no other voice would have dared openly to proclaim the good news of a Saviour risen from the dead. In other words, there would have been no Gospel, no Church, no Christianity. The existence of the Church in all future ages rested upon the courage of a single man. But the prayer of Christ, who foresaw the storm, for that one man was answered. Like a broad rock he stood unmoved by the fury of the raging ocean. And the place of unique honour given to him by Christ in that day, Peter still holds, and will for ever hold in the memory of the Church triumphant.

That Peter denied Christ does not lessen this honour. It only proves how thorough was his repentance, and how complete the change wrought in him by the Spirit under whose influence<sup>1</sup> he spoke before the Sanhedrin. We admit that in later years Paul took a more conspicuous place. But had Peter yielded to the pressure of his foes, probably Paul had never been converted.

Looking back now in the light of subsequent history upon Christ's solemn words near Cæsarea Philippi, we cannot doubt that they refer to this unique place and work destined by God for Peter; and that Christ intended by his words to direct the apostles to Peter as their recognized leader, thus giving to them a unity which otherwise might have

<sup>1</sup> Acts iv. 8.

been wanting, and to prepare Peter himself for his great and difficult task as leader of the Twelve. We all feel that

In seasons of great peril;  
'Tis good that one bear sway.

And our Lord, in order that his disciples in the day of their peril might not need to question among themselves who should take the lead, spoke to Peter in the presence of the other apostles the astounding words now before us. The grandeur of the work and honour thus given to Peter justify the words; and are, in my view, the only conceivable explanation of them.

Doubtless our Lord's choice of Peter as a leader was in harmony with a natural fitness. And the readiness with which, in contrast to the unbelieving or doubting<sup>1</sup> world, he at once confessed the true dignity of Christ, was the quality most needed by one whose chief work was to bear witness about Christ.

To say, as on p. 434, that "Peter did not understand the *πέρρα* as applying to himself," and to call this a "fact," is simply assertion unproved and incapable of proof. He may, like the Virgin Mother, have "kept all these things in" his "heart." To say "that presumptions and assumptions would naturally have shewn themselves had Peter attributed to himself the strange metaphor of the Lord," assumes that the Holy Spirit given to Peter was not a spirit of humility.

It is quite true that the explanation here suggested does not remove all difficulties. Christ used words which, in the sense expounded above, we should never have chosen. Even in the sense indicated, Peter is not, to our Western thought, a rock on which the Church is built. But the very strangeness of the words would rivet the attention of the apostles to Peter, and of Peter to himself, as the divinely appointed leader of the band, and thus prepare

<sup>1</sup> Matthew xvi. 14.

him to lead and them to follow. Moreover, whatever difficulties surround this explanation seem to me immeasurably less than the insuperable obstacles in the way of the other solutions.

JOSEPH AGAR BEET.

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### BRIEF NOTICE.

THE last addition to the Pulpit Commentary is *Archdeacon Farrar's* exposition of 1 CORINTHIANS (London: Kegan Paul and Co.). On this Epistle so many admirable commentaries had already been published—*e.g.* Mr. Beet's, Dean Stanley's, and, above all, Canon Evans's in the *Speaker's Commentary*—that Dr. Farrar has wisely contented himself with an exposition of the most moderate dimensions, while all that he gives in the way of Introduction is compressed into four or five pages. Brief as it is, however, no point of importance is left unnoticed; and his solution of the many difficult problems started by this familiar Scripture is, as a rule, the best that can yet be attained.

His slender rill of exegesis is swollen and well-nigh lost in a flood of baser matter. No less than eight homilists have been let loose on this single Epistle, and for one page that will prove useful to the student there are at least ten in this ponderous volume that he will turn over with a sigh. The value of some of these homiletical effusions will at once reveal itself to any Greek scholar who observes that the moral drawn from St. Paul's injunction on the *debitum tori* in chapter vii. verse 3, is that marriage involves "mutual benevolence," and that this benevolence is defined as "a hearty well-wishing, each wishing the well-being of the other"; while the corresponding phrase in verse 5, *Defraud ye not one the other*, is amplified into "Deception is inimical to the true union of souls. Nothing cuts united hearts asunder so easily and effectively as artfulness and deception."

It is to be hoped that Dr. Farrar will let us have his exposition in a detached and separate form.

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## ENOCH'S GOSPEL.

*Genesis* v. 21-24; *Hebrews* xi. 5, 6; *Jude* 14, 15.

THE Book of Genesis is for the most part, as is now well known, composed of "documents," which were already ancient some four thousand years ago, when Moses wrote. And these venerable documents are often, as from their antiquity we should expect them to be, little more than pedigrees or genealogies, brief chronicles of descent from sire to son; though at times, when any great name comes up, a few pregnant and picturesque words are appended, to tell us of some signal service which the bearer of that name rendered to his kind, or to trace the outlines of some remarkable event in which he took part. When we commence anything like a real study of the Book, we are first amazed, and then delighted, to find how largely it is made up of citations from those ancient documents; amazed at finding that what we took to be the work of one author and one age is in fact the work of many authors of different ages; and yet delighted at finding in it signs of accuracy and research for which we had not looked: for what could more convincingly authenticate his work to us than the fact that, having to write the history of two thousand years which had elapsed before his birth, Moses should cite the very words of the authorities on which he relied, and from which he had learned much of what he knew?

I. "The book of the generations of Adam" (Gen. v. 1), is one of the earliest of these writings, one of the oldest documents in the world therefore. Like many of the rest, it is a pedigree—a pedigree which traces the descent of the

human family from Adam to Noah. It says very little of the elder persons in the roll, and only expands into historical detail when it reaches the great catastrophe of the Flood. Its unknown author commences with Adam and Eve, telling us no more of them than that God created them *in his own likeness*, and that He *blessed* them; but telling us, ah, how much in these simple words, if only we have skill to read them! Then he passes over six generations, giving us only the names of the successive patriarchs, with the years in which they were born and died. The dry uniformity of this antique genealogy is not once broken, there is no delineation of character, no record of events, till we reach the name of Enoch, "seventh from Adam." But here, moved partly by the exceptional beauty of his character, and partly by the singular termination of his career, the chronicler pauses for a moment, and lights up his dry list of names with a few graphic touches which bring the man and his destiny vividly before us. "Enoch *walked with God*," he says, so marking the ruling tone or bent of his life; "*and he was not, for God took him*," so marking the singular character of his end. Nay, he *repeats* the former of these expressive phrases (verses 22 and 24), "Enoch walked with God;" as if to imply that, strange as was his end, the manner of the patriarch's life was even more momentous and significant than the manner of his death; as of course it was, since, always, it is how a man lives which determines how he shall die. Walking *with God* is walking *to God*.

These two brief phrases comprise all that either Moses, or the ancient chronicler whom he quoted, have to tell us about the saintly Enoch and his saintly end. But what *they* have told us is at once confirmed and supplemented by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and by St. Jude. The former takes these ancient words for his text and comments on them thus (Heb. xi. 5, 6): "*By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because*

God *translated* him, for before his translation *he had this testimony, that he had pleased God*: but without faith it is impossible to please him; for *he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.*" The New Testament Apostle confirms Moses therefore, for he tells us that Enoch had "come" to God and "pleased" Him by his daily "walk" of obedience to the Divine Will, and that Enoch "was not," because "God took him" to Himself. But he also enlarges our conception of Enoch's life, by tracing his obedience to "faith;" faith that God *is*, and that He rewards those who seek after Him; while he glorifies our conception of his end, his "taking," by telling us that it was a taking *up* and not simply a taking *away*, a translation and not merely a death.

It is impossible to read these verses in the Hebrews attentively, however, without asking one critical question of interest and importance. The whole argument of the passage turns on Enoch's having received, before his translation, "*this testimony, that he had pleased God*;" and the writer plainly assumes this testimony as a fact well known to every student of the ancient Scriptures. But where do we find any record of such a testimony having been borne to Enoch? In the *Hebrew* Scriptures, nowhere. It is to be found only in the Greek version, the Septuagint, in which the Hebrew for "*Enoch walked with God*," is, by an obvious blunder, translated "*Enoch pleased God*." So that an inspired writer in the New Testament finds an argument on a blunder, or an erroneous rendering of what an inspired writer in the Old Testament had indited! A terrible fact to those who believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible; but one which has no terrors for as many of us as read the Bible after the spirit, and not after the letter. For *must* not a man who walks with God believe in God, believe both that He is—and that He is a Rewarder of all who put their trust in Him? and is not every man who

thus walks with God, whose life is spent in a constant and growing communion with Him, sure to please Him, and to receive some testimony that he has pleased Him ?

St. Jude, like the writer to the Hebrews, at once confirms and expands Moses' brief description of Enoch. For the antique phrase "*Enoch walked with God*," has a technical, as well as a general meaning. In general it denotes an obedient life ; or what, as the obedience is rendered to *God*, we should call a religious or a devout life, a life spent under a constant sense of the Divine Presence, a conscious conformity to the Divine Laws, a deep and strengthening fellowship with the Divine Spirit. But, technically, in the Jewish and Rabbinical use of it, it denotes a *prophetic* life. It implies, that God walked with the man who walked with Him, held him for his friend, spoke to him and moved him to speak, revealed his will to him and prompted him to disclose that will to others and to urge it upon them. And it is this prophetic side of his character which St. Jude brings out when he writes (verses 14, 15) : "and *Enoch*, seventh from Adam, *prophesied*, saying : Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute justice upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodlily wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." St. Jude, therefore, confirms both Moses and the writer to the Hebrews. He, too, implies both that Enoch walked with God, and that he believed in God as the true Ruler and Judge of men ; for how else should Enoch have affirmed that God would come "to execute justice" on all ? But he enlarges our sense of what the Hebrew Lawgiver and the Christian Evangelist meant and implied, both by painting in the darkest hues the excessive ungodliness of the time in which Enoch lived a godly life—so enhancing our conception of his saintliness ; and by teaching that he added the prophetic to the saintly char-



acter—justifying the ways of God with man, and proclaiming an advent, a judgment, in which God Himself would appear to justify his own ways.

Here too, however, a critical question is sure to meet the thoughtful reader. For no one can well read these verses in Jude, without being struck by a certain Rabbinical tone in them, an artificial and affected tone, alien to the simplicity of the New Testament Scriptures. The mere way in which the word “ungodly” is played upon and repeated, twisted and turned about, from noun to adjective, from verb to adverb, is enough to suggest that he is giving us, not his own work, but that of another hand. The suggestion has been verified. It has been discovered that the prophecy which he puts into the mouth of the patriarch is a quotation from an uninspired writing—“The Book of Enoch.” This “Book” was written by a Jew of Palestine, at least a hundred years before the birth of Christ, and is in every way one of the most remarkable productions of its time. The main object of the pious Jew who wrote it was, apparently, to throw into a fictitious form a much more spiritual conception of the prophecies concerning the Messiah than was then generally entertained, or than it would have been quite safe for him perhaps to utter as from his own lips. Familiar with the Hebrew traditions concerning Enoch, he makes Enoch his mouthpiece; and, by throwing back his words to antediluvian times, gives to present truth an antique form, just as French men of letters often veiled their satires and rebukes of the Imperial tyranny under the thin disguise of Roman history and Latin names.

His book is a strange farrago of ancient traditions of the world before the flood, Rabbinical fables, and speculations concerning the world to come, and prophetic interpretations of a singularly pure and lofty kind. According to him, Enoch foresaw and foretold the destruction of

mankind by the Deluge, exhorted the men of his generation to amend their evil ways, penetrated with prophetic eye to the most distant future, lived a retired life in intercourse with angels and spirits, and in meditation on divine things, until he had explored all the mysteries of earth and heaven.

But the most remarkable feature of this book is, unquestionably, its reading of the Messianic traditions. Not only does it blend the allusions to the time of the Messiah ("the coming world" or "age") scattered through the Prophets into "one grand picture of unspeakable bliss, unalloyed virtue, and unlimited knowledge." It also represents Enoch as seeing in the Messiah both the King and the Judge of the world, both the Son of Man and the "Son of God from all eternity." This Son of God and Son of Man is gifted with the wisdom which knows all mysteries; the Spirit in all its fulness is poured out in Him; his glory endureth for ever; He shares the throne of God's majesty; kings and princes will worship Him and invoke his mercy. He pre-existed before all time. "Before the sun and the signs were made, and the stars of heaven were created, his name was already proclaimed before the Lord of all spirits." "Before the creation of the world He was elected." Although still unknown to the children of the world, He is already revealed to the pious by prophecy, and is praised by the angels in heaven. And, at last, He will come to judge the world in righteousness, and to render to every man his due.<sup>1</sup>

To have framed this large and spiritual conception of Christ and his work more than a hundred years before Christ came and dwelt among us, was, it must be admitted,

<sup>1</sup> As I possess only Archbishop Laurence's English translation (A.D. 1838) of the Ethiopic Version of the Book of Enoch, I have based my brief description of it mainly on the learned Dr. Kalisch's report of it in his well-known Commentary on the Pentateuch.

a remarkable achievement. It would, of course, have been quite impossible in the days of Enoch, before any of the great Messianic predictions had been uttered. Nor does the writer of the Book of Enoch seriously attribute it to the Patriarch. It is his own thought which he publishes under a feigned name, either to give it authority or to avoid a dangerous responsibility. But the mere fact that he should have selected Enoch for his mouthpiece shews, I think, how deep and indelible was the impression which the Patriarch had made on the popular mind, both as prophet and as saint.

Nor is this the only fact which points in the same direction. The Rabbinical writings contain many allusions both to the exceptional character of the man and to his singular fate. And even in the Apocrypha we read of him (Ecclus. xlv. 16), "He pleased the Lord, and was translated, *being a pattern of repentance*": a phrase which adds a new feature to our conception of him. It is based, I suppose, on an inference frequently drawn in ancient times from Genesis v. 22, where we read, "And Enoch walked with God *after* he begat Methuselah three hundred years": the implication being, or being taken to be, that the birth of his firstborn was a crisis and turning point in his religious history; that, whereas up to that hour he had gone with the multitude to do evil, he now repented and commenced a life of obedience, meditation, and devotion—so becoming "a pattern of repentance" to all who should come after him.

The fame of Enoch, of his prophetic work and singular end, was not even confined to the Jewish world. It went out into all the earth, and still lives in many an old world legend. Thus, for example, both Stephanus Byzantium and Suidas tell us of a Phrygian sage—whose very name, "Annæus," is but another form of Channoch or Enoch—of whom ancient tradition reports that he lived before

the flood of Deucalion, attained an age of more than three hundred years, foresaw the flood, gathered all the people into a temple and made supplication for them to God, and was finally transported into heaven.

It is only men of mark and weight who leave such deep and enduring footprints on the sands of time as these. And hence, though we must not accept the voice of mere tradition as adding to our real knowledge of what Enoch was and did, it is nevertheless worth while to collect and consider these legendary additions to the true story of his life; for we may legitimately find in them both a general confirmation of all that the Bible tells us of the exceptional force and beauty of his character, and, in so far as they fairly serve that purpose, useful illustrations of the special points which the Sacred Record touches with an emphatic finger. The legendary aureole does not gather round the heads of men who have no light in themselves, and have shewn no power to lead and impress their fellows.

We have now before us, I believe, all that is known of Enoch; and, in the legends and traditions to which I have referred, even more than is absolutely *known* of him, though even these are for the most part quite consistent with the sacred and authentic records of his life. And, therefore, we may proceed with some confidence to formulate our conception both of the man and of his end; of the tenor of his life, and of the manner of his death.

II. The tenor of his life is summed up in the phrase, "*He walked with God.*" But this simple phrase, if we duly reflect on it, contains much and suggests much.

No doubt, as we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *faith* was the root of all that was good and pure in Enoch's character; faith in God as the Ruler and Judge of men, as still present and still active in the world He made, as

punishing men for their sins even when they seem to prosper in them, and as rewarding those who seek and serve Him although his service should seem to entail on them loss and pain and contumely. But this "faith" may assume many forms; breeding in one man a habit of contemplation, and in another a devotional habit; prompting this man to speak, and that man to act, for God. And it says much for Enoch, much for the roundness and completeness of his character, that his faith in God seems to have wrought *all* these effects on him; making him a thinker, and perhaps a thinker with a touch of the mystic in him, drawing him into an habitual and growing communion with God, moving him to rebuke the sins of men and to warn them of the judgments which follow hard on the heels of sin, and yet rendering him zealous in every good work.

Whether or not he was, as the Apocrypha tells us, "a pattern of repentance," whether or not he had run with the wicked antediluvian world to the same excess of riot until the birth of his firstborn, and was then suddenly seized with compunction, we cannot authoritatively decide; but if we know anything of ourselves and of our fellows, we know that no man is without sin, and that the inward stains of sin are only to be washed out by the tears of penitence. We are expressly told, too, that Enoch "came," or "*drew near*" to God, before he walked with Him; and who that has risen into the peace of fellowship with God, or even into the imperfect peace of an imperfect fellowship with Him, does not know what an agony is implied in this approach to God, what pangs of repentance and shame precede the blessedness of the man whose sin is forgiven, whose iniquity is removed?

Nor, as we learn both from authority and experience, can "two walk together except they be agreed." We choose our companions, and much more, our most intimate

companion and friend in the journey of life, from sympathy ; for their likeness to us and for those subtle unlikenesses which make their character the complement of our own ; because they are strong where we are weak but wish to be strong, because we see in them what we crave to see in ourselves. We cannot "walk with" one with whom we are at variance, whose character is not only dissimilar but antagonistic to ours, who most frets and offends us when he is most himself ; though we may come to walk in the most intimate fellowship with one whom, before we knew him, or while we misread him, we regarded with suspicion and distrust. And, therefore, when we are told that Enoch drew near and walked with God, we may reasonably infer that he had overcome the alienation or indifference of nature, that he had been reconciled to God, come to an understanding and agreement with Him ; and that his better knowledge of God, his adoption of the Divine ideal and law of human life, had constrained him to confess and renounce the sins by which he had once been estranged from his Maker and Friend.

*Obedience* is even more strongly suggested by the phrase in which Enoch's life is summarized than penitence. "Two cannot walk together except they be agreed." There must be a general unity of will, of aim and purpose, between them ; they must have an end and a way in common, if they are to walk happily together. And when of the two companions one is human and the other Divine, one is weak, frail, mortal, while the other is all-wise, all-good, almighty, we cannot doubt which of the two wills is and should be subordinated to the other. Enoch *must* have consented to the good and perfect will of God, must have delighted to do it, before he could have entered into that close and sympathetic fellowship with Him which this expressive phrase implies.

Walking, moreover, implies *progress* ; an advance from

point to point of a predetermined course, if not also an ascent toward a predetermined goal. We may assume, therefore, that, as he obeyed the will of God, Enoch came to know it, and the requisitions it made on him, more clearly and fully, to love it with a more perfect heart, to delight himself more intensely in its equity and goodness. We may assume that he *grew* in wisdom, in holiness, in charity; that as the years passed it became more certain to him, and a more welcome certainty, that the will of God was the ruling will of the universe; that it must be done on earth with whatever labour and pain, and that it would one day be done on earth as fully and happily as it is done in heaven.

There was nothing in the conditions of his time to favour this belief. It was a time of unbelief and of misbelief, and, as a natural consequence, it was also a time of the most flagrant wickedness, in which lust and violence ran to unbridled excess. Men had begun "to profane the name of the Lord" (Gen. iv. 26 *Heb.*), *i.e.* to turn from the Maker of all things and to worship the works of his hands. They were busy in inventing arts and handicrafts; in learning to farm, to tend sheep, to make and play on instruments of music, to work in bronze and iron; and they gave themselves up to their crafts and to their joy in them, forgetting the Author of every good and perfect gift. Human wickedness was growing to be so great, and the imaginations of man's heart so evil, that nothing short of the Deluge could cleanse the polluted earth (Gen. iv. 19-24; vi. 5, 6, 11-13). Whence, then, did Enoch derive his faith in God as the true Ruler of the world—the faith which lifted him above the unbelief, the selfishness, the riot and violence, with which the men of his age were filled and corrupted, and enabled him, as it were, to retreat into the garden of Paradise—to pass its long-closed and guarded gates, and to hear once more "the voice of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day"? He could only have derived it, I sup-

pose, from that habit of devout meditation working on old tradition, that habit of prayerful communion with God, which the Hebrew legends with one consent attribute to him, and which, after all, we can hardly tell why, enters into and dominates all our thoughts of him. Grammar and usage and common sense compel us to find in the phrase "Enoch walked with God," the suggestion of a life of constant and progressive obedience to the Divine will, or, at most, of devotion to a prophetic ministry; but, nevertheless, the first and deepest impression it makes on us is that of thoughtful contemplation on Divine themes, of a growing communion with the Spirit of all wisdom and grace. We think first, and most, of Enoch as a saint clothed in the white stole of the mystic; as conversing with God and entering ever more freely into his mind and will; as rapt in the awe and the delight of a Divine fellowship.

Nor is it hard to justify this impression. For when we walk with the friend dearest to us, it is not the mere progress from point to point of which we are most conscious, or even the changeful scene through which we pass. We follow where we are led without much thought, whether of the way we take or of the end to which we travel. What most impresses us, that which we feel to be the very heart and secret of our privilege, is the converse we hold with him, the interchange of thought and affection, the opportunity of acquainting ourselves more fully with him and of renewing our delight in him. And this, we may be sure, was what Enoch most enjoyed in his "walk" with God. It was from this that his faith in God as the Ruler and Rewarder of men drew an ever new inspiration and force.

It was from this Divine intercourse too, no doubt, that he derived both the impulse to speak for God and the messages of warning and rebuke which he delivered to men. Why should *they* not share the bliss he knew? How could they renounce it for the base tumult of the blood, the riot of lust



and violence, in which they strove every man with his neighbour? Ah! they did not know God; they did not know how pure and kind his will was, how inexorable therefore to all offences against purity and kindness. They must be warned. They must be convinced that every sin carries its own punishment in itself, that God *must* execute justice on all and convict the ungodly of their ungodliness. And so, over the white robe of his saintliness, Enoch dons the dark rough mantle of the prophet, and carries the message of righteousness, the warning of love, to an evil and gainsaying generation.

To sum up all in a sentence: Enoch's faith shewed itself first in penitence, then in obedience, and an obedience which grew from less to more; but it flowered in that habit of devout meditation and intercourse with God which, at last, constrained him to speak, for God, to men.

III. The manner of his death, if that may be called a death which yet was none, is described by the ancient chronicler in the phrase, *He was not, for God took him*. It is a phrase which instantly arrests our attention, which would arrest it anywhere if only by its ambiguity, but which is the more striking and impressive in a document in which every other period closes with the mournful refrain, *And he died*. Of Adam, of Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahaleel, Jared—of each of these we are told that he lived so many years, and then that he died; but when we read the name of Enoch, and are expecting hear this familiar and recurring sentence once more, we are startled by a phrase at once new and never repeated, a phrase as suggestive as it is unique, “And he was not, for God took him.” If these words were not so singular, if they did not present so strange a contrast to the standing refrain of “the book of the generations of Adam,” we might put a very simple and easy interpretation

upon them. We might say, "Walking *with* God is walking *to* God; and, of course, when the faithful and saintly Enoch died, God took him home to Himself." But if Enoch went home to God through that gate and avenue of death through which we all have to pass in turn, why is this strange and exceptional phrase employed to denote an occurrence so common and inevitable? It must surely mean more than that?

It does mean much more than that. It was intended to convey, it did convey, the idea—not of a death, but—of a triumph over death. How the ancient world, both heathen and Hebrew, understood it, we learn from their respective traditions. The Hebrews say (Ecclus. xlv. 16) that Enoch was "translated," or, as the word means, "*transferred*"; the heathen, that he was "*transported* into heaven." And the Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and of the New, demand and confirm this conception of his end. The very verb used by Moses to denote Enoch's translation, is used in the Book of Kings to describe the rapture of Elijah again and again (2 Kings ii. 3, 5, 9, 10); while the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts the matter beyond all doubt, to as many as defer to his authority, by telling us in so many words that Enoch was translated *that he should not see death*. We cannot, therefore, say, as we might be tempted to say, "We must *expect* to find legends in documents so old as those quoted in the Book of Genesis, and legends which no reasonable man will now be credulous enough to mistake for history." The credit of the New Testament is involved as well as that of the Old. And it is, therefore, more fair and reasonable to read these ancient words as the Church has always read them, and to understand when we are told that Enoch "was not," what the words obviously imply—that he was no longer in the world of sense because God had caught him up, or called him back, into the supra-sensible world; and to find in the phrase *And God took him*,

not a mere euphemism for an early or a happy death, but a distinct assertion of his assumption into life eternal—his ascension into a larger and happier state of being. Read in the light of the New Testament, these singular words can mean nothing less than this—that God took him bodily up into heaven.

“But that would be a miracle!” Assuredly it would; and the Bible intends us to think of it as a miracle. Nor do I understand why this miracle, if we are to believe in miracles at all, should be incredible to us: for who does not see that it was reasonable and just, wholly consistent with the character of God, that the miracle of judgment by which the antediluvian world was destroyed should be preceded by a miracle of mercy and warning and invitation? who will not admit it to be just that the great saint of that bye-gone world should be manifestly proclaimed a saint, and that its great prophet should have his faith in God openly vindicated and confirmed?

Nor does this miracle of mercy speak to the men of that generation alone. It speaks to us all. It gives us, besides the kindly warning it bore to *them*, a hint of what great things God had provided for men had they been true to the true law of their life and held fast to Him. In the translation of Enoch, as in the rapture of Elijah and the assumption of Moses, we are taught that, for us at least, whatever it may have been to the pre-Adamite world, death is the consequence of sin; that had not we and our fathers “wronged our own souls,” we need not have passed through the purifying agony of death, but have risen, with eyes yet undimmed and natural force not abated, from this life to more life and fuller, corruption putting on incorruption, and this mortal immortality in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, without strain or pang. And which of us can doubt that, though for our sins we must needs die, yet in Christ Jesus there is provided for us something as good as, if not

better than, the grace vouchsafed to those great saints of the pre-Christian world? and that we shall pass through the cleansing ministry of death to a life even more free and large and blessed than that which was revealed to them and of which they laid hold by faith?

The awe and wonder excited by Enoch's translation in the heart of his cotemporaries has left its mark both on the Old Testament and the New. In the one we read, *he was not*, and in the other *he was not found*. Both expressions seem to imply that the event was sudden, startling, mysterious, unlooked for whether by himself or by his friends. "He was not"; kinsfolk and acquaintances missed him from his accustomed path; they sought for him, but could not find him, search where they would. They may have discovered some trace of his departure, as Elisha found the mantle of Elijah, but him himself they never saw again; his saintly life coming to a mysterious but blessed close.

"*Before* he was translated he received this testimony, that he had pleased God," but *in and by* his translation this testimony was repeated with a more audible and commanding voice. It was God's seal of approval visibly impressed on his saintly character. To be caught up out of that noisy crowd of ungodly sinners, with mouths full of hard speeches against the Friend with whom he walked, and whose unlawful deeds daily vexed his righteous soul, into a heaven of calm and peace and joy, was not only a sublime distinction; it was also a solemn Divine attestation to his purity of heart. It proved, God Himself being witness, that he had pursued the true ideal of human life when it was most hard to pursue it. It at once rebuked the corruption and violence of his neighbours, and invited them to cease from doing evil and learn to do well, to renounce their evil lusts and to walk before God in holiness and righteousness all their days. Nothing so profoundly convinces us of the singular purity and devotion of his life as

the fact that he did not see death, nor need to see it; that while on earth, he was meet for heaven: that he should be selected as one of the three sons of men who have been counted worthy to pass from this life to the next without seeing corruption. And what could have persuaded the men of his own time that the true secret of human duty and blessedness lies in a life of active obedience to the will of God, a daily walk with Him, if they were not persuaded when one rose, not from the dead indeed, but straight from earth to heaven?

To Enoch as prophet, no less than to Enoch as saint, God bore testimony by translating him; for we must remember that he was not only a righteous man, but a preacher of righteousness. He saw visions which others could not see, and heard a voice which they could not hear. But these exceptional privileges came to him through great simple convictions which all the world might have shared with him, if they would. In a corrupt age, when men did evil greedily, as though there were no law and no authority but their own will, he held fast to the conviction that the world was God's world, and that therefore it was *his* will that was to be done. If the world would not have Him to reign over them, Enoch was sure that God would come to judge the world, to execute justice on all and to convict the lawless and disobedient of their sins. Nay, more; he seems to have held that even the sins of men could not render the gracious purpose of God of none effect; but that, when He came to judge the unholy, He would bring with Him "ten thousands of holy ones" who had not bowed the knee to iniquity.

This was his message as Prophet. And to the men of his own generation he seems to have delivered it in vain. No man believed his report. They scoffed and flung hard words, both at his message and at him. They would neither believe that it was God who really ruled the world,

nor that He would come to judge it. They asked, "Where is the promise, and where the precursors, of his coming?" They had persuaded themselves that as all things went on of old, so they would continue to go on for ever. But here, in Enoch's translation, was an event *out of* the course of use and wont, which they could not square with their unbelieving guess; an event wholly new, strange, surprising. Here was a visible judgment, a manifest coming. Here was convincing proof of a life above and beyond that of the senses; a demonstration that God did really exist, and that He did reward those who sought Him. In short, the taking up of the Prophet was an emphatic commentary on his message, a splendid illustration, an undeniable vindication of it. And for a moment a great awe fell upon the guilty multitude who had rejected it. Amazed, perplexed, incredulous, they looked for him, but "he was not"; they sought for him, but "he could not be found."

It is in vain that we attempt to explain such a miracle as this, or indeed any miracle. They would cease to be miracles if we could explain them. But on this acknowledged mystery there are four things which may be said with some degree of confidence. (1) He who believes, with Enoch, that God is, and that He is the true Lord and Lover of men, will not find it hard to believe that God has spoken to men when they needed to hear his voice, and has revealed his presence to them, his will, his love. (2) He who believes that God has spoken to men will not think it a thing incredible that, when the Infinite reveals Himself to the finite and the Eternal comes within the bounds and coasts of time, many of his ways should be wonders past finding out, or deny that that may be natural in Him which seems miraculous to us. (3) He who notes how man, by the mere effort of his will, sets in motion and controls the forces of nature, modifies, changes, diverts, hastens, or retards their operation, will not hold it unreasonable that

He who made both man and nature should exert a far more swift, subtle, and effective control over those forces by the fiat of his will. And (4), least of all will any wise man deny the existence of a spiritual force capable of setting natural forces in motion and controlling them, simply on the ground that he cannot comprehend so great a mystery, if only he bear in mind that he is equally unable to conceive or explain any of the great forces of the natural world; that "energy" is at least as great a mystery to him as the will of God is to us, and supplies a much less adequate solution of the phenomena of the universe.

No; miracles are neither impossible nor incredible, if only we can find a good and worthy end for them. And was it not a worthy and sufficient end for the miracle of Enoch's translation, that God should bear testimony to him both as saint and prophet; that He should confirm and ratify the message of his life and words, and so at once teach the men of the ancient world the true law of their life, and invite them to pursue the righteousness which is life, rather than wear the livery and take the wage of sin, which is death? *Must* not He who never leaves Himself without witness have borne some such witness as this to that ungodly age? Did it not behove Him to preach a gospel to a world that was perishing in and by its sins, before the Flood came and swept them all away? Could one expect Him to do less than that?

IV. If, now, any man ask: "But where is Enoch's gospel all this while?" I reply, "You have already heard his gospel again and again." For this gospel is to be collected from all we are told of him. But we may now, for the sake of clearness, proceed to gather it up, (1) from his traditions, (2) from his creed, (3) from his preaching, and (4), above all, from his life.

(1) The human family descended from Adam in two

lines—that of Cain, and that of Seth. The children of Cain appear to have turned away from God and the worship of God from the first, and to have carried themselves as if earth *were* their home and time their portion, eating and drinking to-day because to-morrow they died. But the children of Seth so far maintained their allegiance to the Maker of heaven and earth, as that down at least to the days of Enoch they were still called “the sons of God” (Gen. vi. 2); and even after they were corrupted by intercourse with the Cainites, they appear to have held fast the sacred traditions which they had received from Adam. Among these traditions none was more precious, none so precious as the promise made to man in the doom pronounced upon the Serpent: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise its heel.” This promise (Gen. iii. 15), which is known as the protevangel or Gospel of Adam,<sup>1</sup> foretold the final and utter overthrow of evil in the very hour of its apparent victory. Good might have much to bear, and might suffer long at the hands of evil; but nevertheless, it would overcome in the end: the heel, often bitten, should at last crush the head of its enemy.

Enoch *may* have heard this great prophecy of hope from the lips of Adam himself; for, according to the accepted chronology, Adam lived some three hundred years after Enoch, “seventh from Adam,” was born; and we know too little of the conditions of human life in that primitive age, and so close to its fountain head, to say with any confidence what was possible and what was not. In any case we may be sure that “words of so sweet breath composed,” words so full of promise and hope, were not suffered to die; for have they not come down to us, and come down in all probability through the line of Seth? Enoch *must* have

<sup>1</sup> See THE EXPOSITOR, *New Series*, vol. vii. pp. 86 ff.



heard them, and have handed them on to those who came after him. We may fairly conclude, therefore, that this great promise made to Adam was embraced by the faith of Enoch; and that the very basis and substance of his gospel was the assurance that, let evil flourish as it might, it was as good as dead already, since it lay under the sentence and condemnation of God. And what better, or firmer, basis could it have?

(2) But the general hope inspired by this gracious promise took a definite form in Enoch's mind, and gave shape to what I have called his *creed*. For this creed we are indebted to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who tells us that Enoch believed, (*a*) that God *is*—that He exists; and (*β*) that He *is*—literally, that He *becomes*, that sooner or later He will prove Himself to be—a Rewarder of them that seek Him. The creed is brief enough; it comprises only two articles: and yet who can doubt that it contains “all that is necessary to salvation?” By this faith Enoch was saved; in this he conquered all the allurements and oppositions of an evil world: and that which saved him may save others. He that cometh to God “must believe,” we are told, so much as this; but if he believe so much, it is enough; his access to God is secured; all things pertaining to life and godliness become possible to him—forgiveness, obedience, and the joy and peace of a Divine fellowship. With no other faith than this Enoch became both saint and prophet, and so pleased God that not even the step of death lay between him and heaven.

What, indeed, did Christ Himself come to teach us but this; that God *is*, that He is alive, active, present, though unseen, working in us that we may know and do the good pleasure of his will; and that He rewards us for our trust in Him by saving us out of the hand of our iniquities, and by enabling us to give ourselves up to his service, and to walk with Him in ways of holiness until we, too, are made meet

for an inheritance among the saints in light? True, He has taught us the articles of Enoch's creed with a fulness, an authority, a tenderness impossible in Enoch's day ; but, in substance, the Gospel of Enoch and the Gospel of Christ are one and the self-same Gospel, even as the germ in the acorn is one with the mighty and spreading oak which out-braves a thousand storms.

None the less, the Gospel of Enoch was, as we may see for ourselves, but a development of the Promise made to Adam. All around him were men whose chief aim it was to gratify their cruel and selfish lusts at any cost to themselves or to others ; men who had lost touch with God, and thought, therefore, that they might do evil and yet prosper. "No," said Enoch, "that is not man's true aim. Evil cannot prosper ; it is doomed to defeat. For God has *not* abandoned the world He made. He has *not* left us to ourselves, to walk after the desire of our own eyes, and to clutch at all that a strong hand can grasp. He *will* interpose to assert his law, to punish all who love and serve evil, and to reward all who love and pursue that which is good." And so, holding fast to the promise made to his father and the father of us all, it grew to larger proportions in his mind, and took a more definite and practical form.

(3) How definite and practical it grew to be, while yet it remained substantially the same, we may learn from his *preaching* as reported by St. Jude. Speaking as a prophet, Enoch simply adapted his ruling and abiding convictions to the moral conditions and needs of his hearers. "The wickedness of man was," then, "great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, and that continually." "The earth was corrupt before God, and full of violence." In such terms as these the ancient historian describes the world which was swept away by the Flood. And that the world of Enoch's day was little better we gather from St. Jude's brief description of

its ungodliness, its lawless deeds, its hard speeches against God. To men who were carried away from righteousness and peace in this overflowing tide of inveterate infidelity and flagrant immorality, it was impossible that the Gospel of Enoch should be presented in any form of grace. Of necessity it clothed itself in the severities of warning and rebuke. He still proclaimed God as the true Ruler and the Rewarder of men, indeed; but he warned them that God would prove Himself their Ruler by coming to be their Judge; by appearing to "execute justice on all," to "convict the ungodly of their ungodly deeds," and to reward every man according to his due. Lost to grace, they stood exposed to punishment; and the punishment due to their sins would not and could not fail to be inflicted on them, since offence breeds punishment by an inevitable law. If saved at all, they could only be saved by the swift consuming fire of Divine Justice and Wrath.

Yet, even so, the merciful purpose of Him in whom mercy rejoices over judgment, and whose very justice is but the severer form of his love, is not forgotten. When He came to convict the thousands of the ungodly, He would bring with Him "ten thousands of holy ones" who had been true to Him, when others fell away. Even then, evil was not to overcome good. Even then, good was to win its promised victory over evil. The world, the universe, should yet be purged from its stains, to become the heritage of the pardoned and the pure.

(4) But, of course, it is in the *life* of Enoch that his Gospel takes on its fairest and most inviting form. For here we see, as the men of his age might have seen, that faith in God and the word of God may keep a man pure and good even in an evil and unbelieving world; and move him to pity and to labour, with prophetic zeal, for the reclamation of the most wicked and corrupt. While in the translation, in which his life culminated, we see that such

a man, however evil the time on which he has fallen, may overcome the world by faith, win the manifest favour and approval of God, and thus bear witness that God is in very deed the real Ruler of men and the Rewarder of all who seek Him. In fine, this saintly life, with God's seal visibly impressed upon it, gathers up into one supreme illustration all of truth that Enoch had received by tradition from his fathers, all that he believed for himself—the whole contents of his creed, and all that he preached or prophesied to men.

Taken thus, in its simplicity and completeness, we can hardly escape the reflection that Enoch's Gospel is the very Gospel which *we* should live and preach. For our age, like his, is an age in which unbelief is rife, and a violent self-assertion, and an undue absorption in the pursuit of self-gratification and of gain. It would but shew a monstrous ingratitude to the Divine Ruler of men, and to the effects of his Providence and Grace, were we to affirm that the world is now as full of corruption and violence as it was when the pure light of Enoch's life shone upon it in vain. But, on the other hand, it would be simply to ignore facts which are brought home to us by every day's reading and experience, were we to deny that all the elements of the ungodliness which once destroyed the world, and has often since then destroyed this or that kingdom of the world, are still to be found among us. An age in which public injustice is still done in the name of Religion, and greed of empire hides itself, or scarcely condescends to hide itself, under the cloak of Patriotism; an age in which under the plea of "Art for Art's sake," painters and poets parade the indecency and lubricity which were once accounted a shame and an offence; an age in which men are so selfish and eager for gain that they will rob their neighbours by the rules of the Market and the Stock Exchange; an age in which men of science gravely argue against the fundamental verities of the

Christian Faith, and philosophers lower the tone of public morality by avowing that they recognise no sanctity in the law of marriage, and some of our journalists and novelists, who make a noise in the world wholly disproportioned to their number and importance, expend themselves in paltry sneers, or vulgar jests, or crafty insinuations against all that was once held to be true and pure,—can hardly escape the charge of ungodliness. And we shall best serve such an age as this, we can only keep ourselves unspotted in such a world as this, by being true to the convictions by which Enoch was sustained:—the conviction that evil cannot prosper in the end, however strong and prosperous it may look for a time, but must be punished and destroyed; the conviction that God *is*, even though we can no more prove his existence than we can prove our own; the conviction that He is the true Ruler of men, that the world is his world, and that his will must and will be done in it; the conviction that He will come to judge the world, and to reward every man according to his deeds, whether they be good or whether they be bad.

S. Cox.

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*ESAU AND JACOB.*

(GENESIS xxv. 27–34).

THE names of these brothers are familiar as household words; but their history, copious as it is in parts, leaves not a little for the student of character to supply by inference and comparison. The broad facts are there: the outline, as it were, is clearly traced, but it has been filled in hastily and inconsiderately by interpreters; and the current estimate formed of the pair is far from accurate, while much of the moral has been missed.

I offer the following sketch as a contribution partly to a fair judgment of character, partly to a careful and comprehensive study of Holy Scripture.

Two lines of human life are typified in these brothers. And the type is maintained in their posterity. The names widen out into a world connection and national growth, as they pass into the titular Edom, and the new significant form Israel; Esau, Edom—Jacob, Israel; Esau signifies made, perfected; Edom, red; cognate it is thought in meaning with Adam, and having reference likewise to the material out of which man was made. Jacob is one who takes place of another, a *supplanter*, as Esau in his burst of anger and jealousy interprets the word; Israel is *a prince who has power with God*. The first pair of names taken together may denote one made according to a perfect standard, holding to it, choosing the *red* (whether the pottage which was his first paramount temptation, or the lower nature above which he should have risen); one of *the earth, earthy*. The second pair of names indicates one seeking higher place; one who grasped at his brother's right or a share in it; eventually, one who by Divine power achieved his hope.

Compare the two nations: Edom, a wise and strong people from the beginning; *putting their nest in a rock* (like the Kenites), hardy, untameable, and extinct. Israel, cradled in weakness, suffering and slavery; rescued by no power of their own; trained, protected, delivered again and again; cast out but *not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed*,

Tost wildly o'er a thousand lands  
For twice a thousand years;

existing still, hoping still. In these opposite histories we have the symbolism of a nature standing in its own strength; and, on the other hand, of a nature weak in itself, but strong in imparted strength. We have a life which

clings to earth contrasted with another rising above earth ; a natural organic life, and a grafted heaven-breathed life. The one dies and passes away, the other is undying because Divinely sustained. Nothing is everlasting but by the gift of God, or as belonging to God. Immortal life is the heritage of the being made in the image of God, cared for as the child of God. What, then, if men disinherit themselves? That is an issue we cannot yet follow, it is a portion of the unknown future ; the *utter darkness* closes over it. What we can see is that men may endanger, may cast away, their heritage ; again, that they may be renewed and fitted for it. Both find their likeness *here*. The steps that lead up to or away from our destined blessing may be traced here. The deep principles at work in the formation of habits, or wrapped up in the relations of common life, are indicated here. But they are perhaps unmarked by general readers.

The one direct notice of Jacob's character is that he was a *plain* (*i.e.* upright) *man*. It is but incidentally that we catch glimpses of his self-communing piety, high-wrought feeling, deeply grounded faith. Nor is there a word of what he must have suffered in leaving home : we have to piece together many fragmentary hints before we comprehend his position fully. Still waters run deep.

But the frank manly qualities of Esau are brought forward and prominently seen. We forget his faults, and weep with him that wept. Why is that great disappointment insisted on with unusual pathos? Why is it so touchingly told? I believe that it conveys, and was meant to convey, a permanent moral lesson, a lesson as to the reality of what men lose by reckless habits and selfish thoughtlessness ; a lesson that what is attractive on the surface of human character is no equivalent for what is essential to its vital excellence and ultimate perfection.

The lax and lenient standard of ordinary society favours

many traits in Esau as popular, and represents his errors as venial, a Latin moralist would say *human*, and the word just expresses the defect of his character. On the other hand, Jacob's course is humiliating to pride, and a rebuke to hero-worshippers. Yet it has a clear encouragement for all who are conscious of liability to temptation, of difficulty in resisting it, and who trust to find support and reward in resisting. It exemplifies the Christian assurance, *greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world*.

Look now at the brief opening notice of the two brothers in their youth (Gen. xxv. 27, 28). *The boys grew, and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison; but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

Nothing is recorded of their childhood, nothing of home-discipline and training and associations. It is mere matter of conjecture on what terms they were of affection and intimacy; whether the gentle meditative temper was despised, possibly domineered over, by the more enterprising brother. They may have been rarely together; we need not suppose them dependent on one another for society as in a lonely home. What we are told of Isaac implies that his life was passed in a generally undisturbed tranquillity; his wealth and position would not probably be inferior to those of Abraham, his dependants not fewer. If so, the tribe or encampment was considerable. Abraham mustered over three hundred fighting men, Esau brought four hundred to meet Jacob. And not far off were the populous cities of Canaan, with their opportunities for free social intercourse, for friendship, for marriage. Jacob drew back from them in dislike, which he shared with his mother, of prevalent corruptions and an idolatrous tone. Esau had no such scruples; he courted their acquaintance, perhaps gaining name and fame by daring deeds and adventurous spirit, while he contributed to the protection and provision of his



home. We cannot, therefore, think of the two as living in retirement and isolation; the household was extensive, its relations voluntary and free. On the other hand, the inner life, the pervading spirit of the home, what is the idea we form of that?

If ever there was a household imbued with thorough devotional feeling, and in which the children were objects of peculiar care and trained in all the rudiments of holy living, one might expect it to have been the household of Isaac and Rebekah. What a foundation of religious life was laid in the example of Abraham, and the tradition of his call and his answer of faith! And when that vivid faith was further proved at Mount Moriah, Isaac had shared in it, had equally been found capable of the self-surrender claimed, had returned home with life won from death, and with a renewed apprehension of the *sure mercies* of the living God. And Rebekah, she had come from a distant land for avoidance of any connection with idolatry; she had been chosen, and she came, in faith.

With such parents, "so fathered and so husbanded," we may conceive what an atmosphere of simple piety their children must have breathed; what recollections, what hopes, must have been the food of their infant minds; what a pattern of goodness and earnest of its reward must have been set before their childlike imagination. In that Eastern clime, nurse of contemplative habit, one can fancy the now venerable parents, with the twin boys beside them, pointing to the star-paved evening sky, and recounting with solemn reverent awe the vision shewn, the promise made, to Abram: *Look now toward heaven and tell the stars if thou be able to number them, so shall thy seed be.* Nor would they fail to dwell on the full expansion of the promise, transcending in its moral and sacred significance all mere mention of numbers and time; a promise shadowing out, though dimly till fulfilment came, hope of redemption and

effect of righteousness.<sup>1</sup> *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

Years passed: *the boys grew*, childhood developing into youth, youth into manhood, with constitution and temperament drawing them gradually apart toward separate lines of active and contemplative life. Esau became the skilful roving hunter, to the admiration of Isaac, who delighted in his tales of hardihood, while he feasted with him on his game. Jacob, more staid and thoughtful, clung to the scenes and occupations of home, leaning on his mother's love, pouring his cherished aspirations into her partial ear, and submitting in return to an ascendancy which was eventually to cost him all the comforts he so prized.

From a consideration of natural and constitutional traits, the incident related in the following verses (Gen. xxv. 29-34) brings us to distinctions of moral tendency. Some perhaps may think that it exhibits in the worldly indifference of the one, and the religious anxiety of the other, the natural outcome of their habitual pursuits. Yet the active life is not in itself less highly toned than the contemplative; not less capable of robust thought or religious feeling. It may not be so readily impressed, it may be more difficult to direct; but, given a right influence and direction, it is perhaps the root of a manlier character, it sends forth stronger shoots of virtue and practical holiness. Muscular Christianity has become a proverb; in some degree it bears the characteristic mark of the western hemisphere. Energetic idleness<sup>2</sup> is like a brier which, duly grafted, bears a more vigorous plant than the delicate product of the garden nurtured on its own stem.

✓ As regards formation of character, a quiet and retiring

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxxii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Strenua inertia* (Hor.), thus rendered in a memorable sermon preached at Eton by the Bishop of New Zealand, on Whitsunday, 1854.

habit has liabilities and defects of its own, no less than the fondness for hardy sports or the turmoil of public contests. The one bias needs stimulus; the other needs control. Esau and Jacob are examples of failure under opposite temptations. Had Jacob shared the courage of Esau, he would have escaped much obloquy. Had Esau been imbued with the faith of Jacob, he might, like Samuel, and One greater than Samuel, have grown up *in favour with both God and man*.

Jacob is commonly blamed for taking an unfair advantage. The compact, and the issues involved in it, are not always allowed due weight. Moreover, before unreservedly blaming him, we ought to be more in possession of the circumstances than we are. The inspired narrative does not so much as hint at a fault on his part: the one comment, the one only moral drawn, is in reprobation of Esau. Now it is far from impossible that Jacob's demand was in some measure a defensive one, and put forward to emancipate him from a felt tyranny. All that we see is that the bargain was unequal. Yet it may well be questioned whether it appeared so in the eyes of either at the moment. Jacob undoubtedly knew that Esau had little regard for that privilege which to him himself was all in all. Further, the very thing which constitutes the inequality of the proposal in the highest degree involved the principle which is its chief justification; viz. the principle of faith towards God. Esau was in extremity, faint, exhausted. The temptation presented to him is not to be thought a slight temptation, though it was one which required neither the self-command of a Stoic nor the faith of a Christian martyr, but simply a sound well-balanced mind, to refuse at such a cost. Certainly in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is spoken of slightly and contemptuously, because in very truth there is no measure of proportion between the poor satisfactions of self-indulgence and the happiness of a

reception into favour with God. But until in our daily experience of the world we see more instances than we do of men able to strike the balance between things temporal and things eternal, we need not underrate the trial, though we may take warning from its history against yielding to the like.

What was comprised in the birthright we gather in part from the distinct declarations of Scripture; but occasional hints go far to prove much more. The conclusion generally and with good reason accepted is, that this privilege of the firstborn conveyed three things: a double portion of the patrimonial inheritance; the right of precedence in the family; and finally the office of priestly ministration at the family altar. There is no question as to the first of these three. The statements in Deuteronomy xxi. 17, and 1 Chronicles v. 1, 2, are decisive. But had the birthright contained this benefit only (as the verse in Chronicles taken literally would imply); or, again, had the second part of it bestowed a mere titular and conventional rank, there would have been no test of faith, or high principle, in either desiring or despising it. It is evident that some deeper promise, some spiritual good, underlay the material advantage. The writer to the Hebrews represents the conduct of Esau as *profane*, and also as involving a twofold loss. And it is simply characteristic of his profane unspiritual temper, that he negatives this view and asserts a claim to the blessing after he had parted with the birthright. What was this spiritual good? What in point of fact was included in the gift of precedency, or headship, which Isaac conferred on Jacob in the words *be lord over thy brethren*; words echoed at a later date with emphatic and explanatory addition in Jacob's own blessing upon Judah? The promise of the Messiah. For this was the peculiar blessing pronounced upon Abraham and the children of Abraham: *In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the*

*nations of the earth be blessed.* Originally, the reward of faith, this continued to be the object of faith; it could not but be contained in the prerogative formally and solemnly handed down by father to firstborn, or to him who had the right of the firstborn.

The third constituent of the birthright was the priesthood. This is affirmed by the most authoritative expositors, and is collected by reasonable inference from scattered notices of Scripture. And a pregnant fact it is. It signified not merely that the firstborn should rightly take the lead in serving God; it embodied practically the axiom that moral obligation accompanies spiritual privilege. It was in a manner a call to the firstborn, to represent in holiness of character and consecration, Him of whom he was pre-announced to be the ancestor. The fact and its meaning come out into view by degrees. When Moses was first commissioned to the court of Pharaoh, he was authorized to demand the release of Israel, collectively, as the *firstborn of the Lord*. When the release had been effected, the path of duty and of promise was opened before them and set out in these words, *ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests*. The two terms are plainly identified and equivalent. Again, the frequent commands, *sanctify unto Me all the firstborn, the firstborn shalt thou give unto Me*, point in the same direction; eventually, they culminate in the application of the epithets *firstborn* and *firstbegotten* to Christ Himself, and in the description of the Christian body as the *church of the firstborn*.

It is further observable that the birthright, as the heritage of a single person, terminates with Jacob. The position of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in relation to God was unique. No other individual names are so associated with the Divine name. But that honour is shared by the collective family; and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is known also as the God of Israel. Consistently

with this, when the patriarchal privilege passes over to the twelve heads of the future tribes, the threefold elements of the one birthright are distributively assigned; the double portion to Joseph; the precedence, including the lineage of the Messiah, to Judah; the priestly ministry to Levi.

These considerations assuredly prove that the acquisition of the birthright was no mean or common object of ambition, but one adequate to engage the whole soul as with a master passion and the longing of a life. We are likely to judge both motives and character incorrectly, unless true measure is taken of the prize contended for, and the passions called into play. Jacob had coveted, no doubt *coveted earnestly*<sup>1</sup> and long, what Esau relinquished with indifference. Is there no mark here of mental, of moral, superiority and inferiority? The one rose to a just estimate of his object; the other *comprehended it not*. It is no strained conjecture to assume that the elder brother had a certain value for it, as belonging to his accredited position; that he regarded it as men regard an honorary title or a step in rank: whereas the other had gauged its true spiritual meaning and glorious promise. Was this a trivial difference? It is the difference between what ennobles and what degrades the human soul: it is the superiority of depth of feeling, coupled with persistency of aim, over reckless unreasoning levity. The simplicity of the Bible leaves much to be filled up in its histories, and is easily misread. We do surely misread it here if we see in all this only an encounter of cupidity with carelessness, if we fail to discern in this diptych of moral portraiture the evil of self-gratification, incapable of pursuing its highest good, and the worth of settled lofty purpose, working out its thoughtful way to eventual fitness for the *goodly heritage* in view.

It might be important, could we but find the answer, to ask when this compact took place; in youth, or manhood,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 31.

or middle age? Was the transaction secret or avowed? If known at home, was it known abroad? What was the effect on the position of Esau, and what on his mind? If we had positive information on these heads, it is not impossible that a very different colouring might be thrown upon the subject. And if we cannot have the whole case before us, it should be a matter of conscience to be forbearing in our judgment, and rather to be reverent than rash. As I have intimated above, we do not look in the Bible for exhaustive details; its statements are designed, not for the gratification of curiosity, but the glorification of Truth. There is a principle both in what they omit, and in what they set forth. The grand realities of life, the ✓ broad outlines of the laws which govern it, are *written for our learning*; the apportionment of praise and blame, which is dear to the complacent and the censorious temper, finds but rare or incidental expression, as though it were proper only and reserved for the determination of the One Judge who reads all the heart.

It is easy to believe that Jacob revealed what had taken place in confidence to his mother. It has been thought that Esau's Canaanite marriages were due to the change in his prospects, and his consciousness of it. It may be that, angry with himself, wounded in feeling, made reckless by remorse, he fled, as men do, any whither to escape self-reproach, and sought in connecting himself with those who knew nothing of the Abrahamic hope, to find arguments to second and support him in abandoning it. If so, as there is a note of time for his marriage, so there is, approximately, for his compact with his brother. And if so late a date is assumed for the transaction, it alters, or at least affects, the complexion of it. For in that case it cannot be regarded ✓ as an accident of thoughtless impulse; rather it evinces the decision of the matured character, when men have taken their line and are fixed in habit, and, if a crisis comes, prove

the nature of their choice. Esau, according to this theory, yielded with his eyes open to the condition imposed upon him; his consent was deliberate, and left him no right of recalling it. Jacob may have felt that, in imposing and exacting it, he was justified by the actual terms of the promise at his birth, and more than justified by the glorious expectation which that promise was understood to include.

There are those who instinctively think more of others than themselves; with whom humility is a habit, and acquiescence a second nature; sensitive to giving offence, still more to giving pain, they are almost incapable of contending against the express wish and interest of another, or of advancing and insisting on their own. But there come moments which absolutely choke up and change the current of their lives. And there is a point with the most pliable beyond which they cannot go in giving way; a time when independence becomes a vital necessity.

I say not that it was so with Jacob; but it may have been so. In the absence of direct proof, it is as fair to put the best as the worst construction on his motives. And the tenor of the Sacred Record is in favour of doing so. We see the Divine hand leading, the heavenly vision encouraging him, and that these mercies were not unthankfully lost on him. In his latest days he recurs devoutly to the remembrance of them, to *the God which fed me all my life long, which redeemed me from all evil*. Is it not credible that he had this recognition from the beginning? that he thought in earnest and acted in faith; that his whole moral being was drawn out and raised above itself by the hope set before him? And if he knew it to be unregarded by his brother, could he do otherwise than desire to secure it for himself?

J. E. YONGE.



### *THE VINDICTIVE PSALMS.*

THEORIES of inspiration have certainly a great deal to answer for, and not least among their unfortunate results is the recurring necessity, in this nineteenth century, of apologising for the expression in Hebrew literature of feelings which, though not amiable, were perfectly natural and consistent, and of defending them as if they had not only the sanction but the express authority of the Divine Being.

Mr. Bernard's account of the Vindictive Psalms is quite satisfactory so far as it goes, but I should like to carry it a little further. The apology for Jael and David and the unknown author of Psalm cxxxvii., for not thinking and feeling and expressing themselves as Christians, is that they lived before the proclamation of the Christian standard of morals, and indeed before the possibility, except in the rare vision of one or two lofty souls, of the conception of that standard. Would that as good an apology could be made for language and, alas! actions, far outstripping in horror and cruelty anything in even the fiercest of the Psalms, actions which lie at the door of professed Christian Churches and Christian states. Curses after all, according to the proverb, return, like chickens, home to roost, and do most harm to those who utter them; but devilries like those of the Spanish inquisition and of Alva in the Netherlands blast and ruin.

Mr. Bernard remarks quite truly that the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy," is rather implied than formally enunciated in the Mosaic code. A formal statement of what was so firmly established in the unwritten moral code of the race was unnecessary. Nor when the law of neighbourly love was promulgated was there any need, as in the time of Christ, to ask in the case of an Israelite, "Who is my neighbour?" All of Hebrew race were included in the term. But the foreigner had no claim

on the Jew for the exercise of the duty of kindliness. The natural and normal attitude towards him was that of hostility. What the author of *Ecce Homo* says of ethnic morality generally was true of Hebrew feeling: "That system of morality, even in times when it was powerful and in many respects beneficial, had made it almost as much a duty to hate foreigners as to love fellow-citizens. Plato congratulates the Athenians on having shewn in their relations to Persia, beyond all other Greeks 'a pure and heartfelt hatred of the foreign nature.' Instead of opposing it had sanctioned and consecrated the savage instinct which leads us to hate whatever is strange and unintelligible, to distrust those who live on the farther side of a river, to suppose that those whom we hear talking together in a foreign tongue must be plotting some mischief against ourselves." In the case of Israel the sentiment took an even intenser and fiercer form. The polytheism of the Greeks was more favourable to the cultivation of friendly relations with strangers than the stern monotheism of the Hebrews. If an island had been wasted, or a city sacked, there was always the chance that the priest of some offended deity might appear to demand expiation for the offence and restitution of the violated right. But in the Jewish creed all the gods of the heathen were idols, powerless to revenge an insult, while all other nations but themselves were enemies of the one true God, Jehovah. To destroy them was to work his will. Acts at which the Christian sense shudders were performed, or were believed to have been performed, by the express command of the national God.

In a race so reared and nurtured, national antipathy and hatred would be a religious sense; denunciations, even the fiercest, would seem the natural expression of feelings, not only justified, but commanded.

Among the greatest difficulties attached to Psalm cix., which he takes as the most pronounced of the Vindictive

Psalms, Mr. Bernard adduces the fact that "editor after editor, themselves inspired men, did not hesitate to receive this psalm as an inspired psalm, and to place it among the hagiographa." It is precisely this acceptance of the vindictive utterances of the Psalms as the righteous and natural expression of the combined religious and national sentiment, which furnishes their truest explanation and their best excuse. Criticism more and more tends to the opinion that in the Psalter we have the outcome rather of public than of individual feelings. That there are among the Psalms many that owe their existence to personal experience, no one will deny; but even these were adopted into the national hymn-book because they were suited for public needs. And in by far the greater number we hear, not David or Hezekiah, but the whole community, or at least the better part of it, giving expression to its patriotism or its religion, offering its prayers, pouring out its complaint, bringing to the feet of the nation's God gratitude for the past or hope for the future.

Now if the terrible imprecations of the Psalms can be shewn to come, not from an individual, smarting under personal wrong, but from the patriot who has seen and shared in his country's humiliation and oppression, they will sound, even to us, with less bitterness; if the fierce passion of revenge has been awakened, not by the sense of personal injury, but by the sight of injustice and cruelty exercised by some foreign tyrant on a helpless and innocent people, it will assume a different character even in Christian eyes. The spectacle of a man "unpacking his soul with curses" to relieve his own sense of injury is a poor and painful one. If however the wrong under which he writhes is one in which the whole of society has shared, so that its infliction marks a general degradation and corruption, the attitude of the sufferer assumes something of dignity, and his words rise to the height of a moral condemnation passed

by a righteous tribunal. Thus we never feel shocked at the "grand curses," of Shakespeare's Timon, though they are, both in their range and terrible animosity, almost a counterpart of the imprecations of Psalm cix. :

"Piety, and fear,  
Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,  
Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood,  
Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,  
Degrees, observances, customs, and laws,  
Decline to your confounding contraries,  
And let confusion live!"

Such a total collapse and ruin of all social life and happiness is of course far worse an issue than the miseries imprecated on the head of the unknown enemy in Psalm cix. and his family, supposing for a moment that its object is a single person; and yet we do not turn in imagination from Timon as a monster to be abhorred and loathed, which must surely be our feeling towards the author of the psalm in question, if his dread curses are the expression of an individual rage. But suppose no one individual, but Israel, down-trodden, betrayed, and oppressed, speaks in the psalm; suppose the object of the fierce invective to be, not some personal enemy, but the impersonation of the national foe, the Babylonian power, or the Seleucid policy towards Israel gathered up and concentrated and represented in the concrete, for the very purpose of giving a sharper edge to the bitter wrath that has so long been pent up; suppose too that identified with the foreign foe are some from the bosom of Israel itself, who, seduced by gold or promises, have proved traitors at once to patriotism and religion, to their country and their God,—in such a case, though we might well sigh over a state of feeling which could find utterance in such dire imprecations, we should not wonder at all, and perhaps should not have the right to condemn. The subject has been well put by

Reuss (*La Poésie Hébraïque*): "We meet here and there in the collection, amid the most touching expressions of resignation, of humility, of trust, compositions indicating quite another temper—fierce anger, terrible imprecations, maledictions, cries for vengeance, which frighten the reader and shock Christian feeling (Pss. lxix., cix., lii., lviii., etc.); and as the Psalter is a book put and intended to be put in the hands of all the faithful, it is often asked whether the reading of such compositions is not dangerous to morality? Alas! yes, if these imprecations are placed in the mouth of a political personage, to be launched at the head of a rival; if in reality we have to do in these psalms with dynastic quarrels or ambitious struggles, it would be quite necessary to agree with the conclusion that makes the scruple about reading them natural and legitimate. Such sentiments are deserving of blame, and mar a book of prayers. But is this view the right one? Does the Book of Psalms speak of the struggles for political supremacy, of the rights of a throne betrayed or avenged? Did Saul and Absalom profess a different religion from David? There is not the slightest allusion to matters of this kind. Two peoples are before us, two peoples separated by a gulf, having nothing in common, neither manners, nor language, nor laws, nor God. The antipathy between them is mutual and equal; but one of them is master and abuses its power in a manner the most cruel and hateful; the other is oppressed, misunderstood, harassed in every way, especially in regard to what it holds most dear, finally persecuted, hunted down, butchered: and is it wonderful if it sometimes loses patience, if it gives itself up to transports of rage, if, at times, despair causes it to lose that equilibrium which otherwise it knows how to preserve? Certainly, French Protestants will not blame too severely a display of feeling which, counterbalanced as it ever is by passionate expression of entire submission to the decrees of God, has found,

after long centuries, an echo in souls not less cruelly tried."

In order to give a complete representation to this view of the subject, it would be necessary to examine each of the Psalms which are distinctively vindictive, and shew from their contents that they in particular have this general application and express public not private sentiment. But perhaps it will be sufficient here to do this only in regard to the two compositions selected by Mr. Bernard as typical of the fierce spirit which seems so out of place in the Bible.

Now in the case of Psalm cxxxvii. a single word will suffice. It tells its own tale, and that too plainly for misconception. It professes to come, a voice of wailing, from the whole community of captive Israel, or at all events from the better part of it, the Levitical body it may be, which beyond question supplied many psalm-composers. The plural in the first verses and its resumption in the last verse leave no doubt that the community speaks, and not a solitary individual. It is true that with the bewildering indifference to our ideas of syntax which Hebrew poetry so constantly exhibits, there is a sudden change to the singular in Verse 5. Israel spoke, or rather her poets made her speak, indifferently in the singular or plural. Psalm cxxiv. opens: "If it had not been the Lord who was on *our* side, now may Israel say," and the poem proceeds consistently in the same number; Psalm cxxix.: "Many a time have they afflicted me from *my* youth up, may Israel now say," and preserves as consistently the singular throughout. But generally the bard, either for poetic effect or because he was weary of one mode of expression, or very frequently because some strain of an older song suddenly came into his mind, and he adopted its language without caring whether it fitted into the syntax of his own verse, allowed himself sudden and, to us, start-

ling interchanges both of number and person. In this case, however, the fact that the plural is resumed in the very verse that contains the vindictive wish removes any objection which a literal restriction to the singular in Verses 5 and 6 might require. It is certainly in the name of the whole nation that the Psalmist addresses the daughter of Babylon (*i.e.* according to a common figure, Babylon with all its people): "Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served *us*."

The 109th Psalm at first sight has a more personal tone. Mr. Bernard accepts the traditional Davidic authorship, which however has nothing but the title to support it. Even Delitzsch allows that there are linguistic reasons for placing the psalm much later, and most other critics unhesitatingly bring it down to the post-exile period, many to that of the Antiochean persecution. But neither authorship nor date is of great consequence for the appreciation of the psalm. The point to determine is whether it speaks for suffering Israel at large, to the impersonation of an oppressive and cruel power, or whether it is the outcome of individual resentment and rage.

And here, notwithstanding that the imprecations down to Verse 20 are all directed against a single person, and that under figures and in language which seem unsuited for a collective body, yet there are indications which bear out the theory that it was written from the point of view of the oppressed people, and was aimed at an impersonation of the Babylonian or Persian or Syrian power, and not against any individual. In the first place, the fact that it throughout preserves the singular of the first person does not, as we have seen, limit its utterance to the expression of personal feeling. The first verse might have run, "Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise, *may Israel now say*." Then as to the object of the maledictions, the opening plurals "the wicked," "the deceitful," "they compassed me about," "my

adversaries," certainly prepare us to expect that the poet's wrath will be hurled at the whole body of persecutors. But there is no device of literature that the Hebrew genius loves so much as personification. It must look at everything in the concrete. It does not favour abstract ideas or abstract terms. Where a modern would write of *policy*, *tyranny*, *injustice*, *treachery*, and the like, the Hebrew describes what he sees in his mind's eye, *a sceptre extended*, *a right arm raised to strike*, *a snare spread for the innocent*, and so on. In accordance with this habit of mind, powers like those of Assyria and Egypt are usually denoted by one concrete term, either the name of the chief city, the title of the ruling prince, or are described by some readily recognized symbol, "The beast of the reeds," "Rahab," and so on, or are gathered up and presented in the person of some monster of baseness and wrong. The latter was the plan adopted by the author of this psalm. From the mention of the adversaries who had rewarded him "evil for good and hatred for love," he goes on in a way most misleading to our ideas, but perfectly natural for a Jewish writer, to collect all his passion of revenge and pile it on one victim, obtaining by a literary figure the advantage desired by the monarch who wished all his foes had a single head, that he might destroy them all by a single blow.

The spirit of fierce revenge which could thus, during all the history of Israel down to Christ, justify itself by the patriotism which resented the injuries and humiliations to which the nation had been subjected, and by the religion which taught that the national foes were likewise the foes of God, does no doubt sometimes, here and there directly, and often by implication, find condemnation in the Old Testament itself. It is, no less than private revenge, condemned by the teaching of Christ. But can we wonder that it should so long have existed in a nation, which in other respects was so deeply imbued with a true religious



sense, a nation to which was entrusted as its special mission to preserve and hand on the knowledge of the one God,—can we wonder that Israel should have hated its foreign foes so bitterly and cursed them so passionately, when eighteen hundred years of Christian light have not been able to put an end to war, or taught men that international jealousies and hatreds are as sinful and foolish as the enmity and rancour of individuals?

A. S. AGLÉN.

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### THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

#### VIII. ST. PAUL'S GOSPEL.

##### *Chapter iii. 4-7.*

INTO this single sentence, St. Paul, no longer a young man, has compressed the main outlines of that Gospel, to proclaim which had been the business of his manhood. The verses might almost be adopted by any one in search of a creed as a summary, no less authoritative than convenient, of the Pauline or "evangelical" system of doctrine. There is no point of faith touched in this statement which does not receive an ample discussion in one or other of St. Paul's Epistles. There are indeed fundamental doctrines of the faith, such as the Trinity or the Divinity of our Lord, which are here implied rather than expressly taught. But for a succinct statement, at once comprehensive and precise, of what St. Paul and the whole New Testament teach on what is properly termed "the Gospel," that is, God's way of saving sinful men, I hardly know where we shall turn to find a better.

It is plain that within the limits of a short paper my exposition of such a passage can be nothing more than a sketch. The truths to be passed in review are numerous; they are all vital, and at another time would all deserve the

fullest treatment. What has now to be attempted is to review them rapidly, noting how vital to Christian faith they really are, and at the same time how they come to be expressed in the form which they wear in this passage, as the one best adapted to the design of the writer and the situation of his correspondents.

It may assist the reader to find his way over so wide a field if he will note at the outset two points. First, the central words, on which as on a peg the whole structure both of thought and of expression hangs, is the proposition—"He saved us." Alike in grammar and in theology, this is the key to the whole. It is a statement in the historical sense, because the good news is a record of past activity on the part of God on man's behalf. The design of that Divine activity is our salvation; and our comprehension of the steps which lead to that end, must depend upon our doing entire justice to the great Christian thought contained in the technical term *salvation*. In what sense is man lost? In what must his salvation consist? What is necessary in order to it? In proportion as these questions are answered in a profound or in a shallow way, will be our appreciation of those redemptive actions of God—the mission of his Son and the outpouring of his Spirit.

Next, let it be noted that in this saving of man by God three leading points have to be attended to: The source or origin of it; the method of it; the issues and effects of it. If these three are kept well in mind, that all the details of the Gospel plan may be grouped under them, it will conduce to an intelligent reading of this passage. What we have to ask from St. Paul is a distinct reply to these three great queries: (1) From what source did God's saving activity on our behalf take its rise? (2) Through what methods does it operate upon us? (3) To what ultimate issues does it conduct those who are its objects?

I. The answer to the first of these need not detain us

long. True, it is a point of primary importance for the immediate purpose of the writer in the present connection. What he is engaged in enforcing upon Cretan Christians is, a meek and gentle deportment toward their heathen neighbours. With this design, it is most pertinent to observe that they have not themselves to thank for being in a better state than others—saved Christians instead of lost heathen; not themselves, but God's gratuitous kindness. It is worth remarking too in this connection, how singularly human are the terms selected to express the saving love of God. Two terms are used. The one is God's "kindliness" or sweet benignity, like that gentle friendliness which one helpful neighbour may shew to another in distress. The other is God's "love for man," literally, his philanthropy, or such special benevolence to all who wear the human form as might be looked for indeed among the members of our race themselves, but which it startles one to find is shared in by Him who made us. These curiously human phrases are chosen, it is to be presumed, because St. Paul would have us imitate in our dealings with one another God's behaviour toward us. In substance, however, they describe just the same merciful and compassionate love in God our Saviour, to which the whole New Testament traces back man's salvation as to its prime or fountal source. That the originating impulse to undertake the work of his salvation has not to be sought in man himself, but, outside of man's deserts, solely in God, in the spontaneous sovereign goodness of the Divine nature, is the very first of all evangelical truths. On this point, to start with, Christian consciousness has been in unanimous accord with the witness of Scripture. And this ultimate reference to the free self-moving love of God, is a truth fruitful in its influence upon Christian experience. It strips man of credit to robe God in glory. It humbles our self-conceit to make us debtors to free grace. It de-

livers us from painful efforts at saving ourselves, by putting into the empty hand of humble sinners as a gift, what the best of men could never win as a prize. Hope was born for the guilty and evil, when, like a dawn, there shone forth at the coming of the Christ that kindness towards his fallen creatures, which had lain long hidden within the heart of God. For the manifestation or epiphany of that kindness to man was (as this Epistle has already taught us) the advent of the Son of God as our incarnate Saviour.

It is quite in harmony with this ascription of our salvation to God's love as its fountain-head, that, throughout his account of the process, Paul continues to make God the subject of his sentence, and man its object. All along the line, God appears as active and we as receptive; He is the doer or giver, man the field of his operations and the recipient of his benefits. No doubt there is another side to the great process, viewed as a human experience. There are states of repentance, of faith, of obedience, and of perseverance, in which a man is not simply passive, but co-operant with the Divine Worker. There is such a thing as letting oneself be reconciled to God; such a thing as not receiving the grace of God in vain; such a thing as giving diligence to work out one's own salvation. Nor are the apostolic writers slow to insist on the responsibility of every man for the performance of those duties which spring out of the call of the Gospel, however slow they may be to attempt—what theology has found impossible—a speculative reconciliation betwixt the human and Divine factors. Here, however, the tenor of St. Paul's argument leads him to view the saving process from the Divine side. In the light of all Scripture as well as of all experience, it stands fast that, from its inception right on to its accomplishment, the praise of our salvation must be ascribed, not at all to us who through grace receive it, but wholly to Him whose love devised and whose grace confers it.

II. We pass next from the epiphany of God's unmerited kindness in the advent of the Saviour, to that process by which individuals, at Crete or elsewhere, become partakers in his salvation.

The conversion of one born a heathen wears a conspicuous character, which is usually wanting to cases of conversion among ourselves. It is true that the spiritual elements of the change are alike in both. In both there occur a quickening of the conscience to feel the evil and guilt of the sinful past in God's sight, a turning of the moral nature to desire entire purity, and the setting in of a new drift of the man in his whole being towards God and the unseen. In both alike, the religious nature seems to awaken to fresh truths; in both the spiritual faculty of faith finds for the first time its legitimate object; in both the tidings of the Divine love forgiving sin exerts the same charm, dispelling fear and dislike, begetting confidence in God, inspiring hope for the future, calming or soothing the spirit, and imparting to the active forces of the will a nobler impulse than before. All this will be found to take place below the surface in the nominal Christian when he begins to be a Christian indeed, no less than in the heathen convert who presents himself for baptism. Yet in the former case, such a change may pass unrecognized by onlookers. It may neither reveal itself in any apparent alteration of outward conduct, nor be registered by any ecclesiastical act of profession. Not so with such men as Paul was addressing in Crete. The day of their baptism, on which they sealed their conversion to the Christian faith, had marked a complete revolution in every department of their life. It had in many cases severed family ties. It had in all cases made them marked men in society. It had brought them into the circle of a strange community, and affiliated them to new comrades under the badges of a foreign religion. Outwardly, no less than inwardly, they were become new

creatures; the old had passed away and all things were become new. The font at which they sealed their vows of discipleship had proved to be a second birth—the starting point for a changed life.

Of course it is still the same among the converts who are won at our mission stations abroad; and we require to keep the condition of an infant missionary church well in mind if we would do justice to such language as St. Paul has here employed to describe the conversion of his readers. He speaks of the change in phrases borrowed both from its outer and inner side, its ritual and its spiritual elements. Inwardly, the convert was saved by the power of the Holy Spirit regenerating and renewing him. Outwardly, this spiritual second birth found its expressive seal in the bath or laver of holy baptism. But in St. Paul's vivid language these two, the spiritual fact and its ritual expression, run together into one, in a way which has perplexed or misled many theologians. The chances are that St. Paul felt no necessity to keep them very sharply apart, even in his own mind. In the experience and recollection of his readers, the two were fused together, and he was free to use the language of rhetoric with no dread of a logical misapprehension. Not fearing lest any one should suspect him of seeing some magical or transforming virtue in a bath of water, Paul could talk quite naturally, and without misgiving, of the laver of the new birth as well as of renewal by the Spirit of God. The truth is that the figment of regeneration through the mere rite of water baptism, as it strangely developed itself in later times, after the poetry and symbolism of Christianity had stiffened into grotesque shapes of dogma, could scarcely have found its way into men's minds at all but for their long familiarity with the baptism of infants. So long as we associate the administration of the rite only or mainly with converted adults, it is abundantly evident that the catechumen must be a convert before he is

baptized. That is to say, the spiritual change must precede the rite, not be produced by it. The man needs, it is clear, to have turned from his idols, to have believed in Jesus Christ, to have washed his soul in the blood of expiation, to have received the new heart by the Holy Ghost, to have become, in a word, a new man and a child of God before he is prepared to submit to the ceremony of a formal initiation into Christ's society. How could it ever be dreamt that all this was a mysterious consequence of that ceremony?

Paul's language, therefore, could not mislead his Cretan readers. But it was admirably adapted to revive their most touching recollections. As they read his words, each one of them seemed to himself to stand once more, as on the most memorable and solemn day of his life, beside the sacred font. Once more he saw himself descend into the laver to symbolize the cleansing of his conscience from idol worship, from unbridled indulgence, from a vain conversation, by the precious death and burial of his Lord. By that act how utterly had he broken once for all with his earlier life and its polluted associations, leaving them behind him like a buried past! Coming up afresh to commence the new pure career of a Christian disciple, he had received the symbolic white robe amid the congratulations of the brotherhood, who thronged around to welcome the new-born with a kiss of love—to welcome him among that little band who, beneath the cross, had sworn to fight the devil in Jesus' strength, and, if need arose, to shed their blood for Jesus' name! How keenly, as all this rushed back upon the Christian's recollection, must he have felt that a change so wonderful and blessed was the Lord's doing. What power, save God's, could have turned backward the currents of his being, reversing the influences of education with the traditions of his ancestry and the usages of his fatherland? What hand, but the Almighty's, could have snatched him out of the doomed nations over which Satan reigned,

to translate him into that kingdom of light—the kingdom of God's dear Son? Where was the spiritual force that could have opened his eyes, cleansed his conscience, quickened his heart, and made a new man out of the old one, save that Divine Spirit whose advent at Pentecost had been the birthday of a new era for the human family? The grateful praise which could not fail to mount to the lips at such a recollection, was a doxology to the Triune God, into whose Name he had been baptized: to the Father unseen, eternal fountain head of mercy; to the Incarnate Son, sole channel for its manifestation to guilty men; to the Holy Ghost, who, like a stream of life, had been plentifully poured forth from the Father, through the Son, to be the effectual giver of life in sinful souls!

If the modern Christian, cradled and nursed within the Church, cannot recall, with equal clearness, the day of his new birth, or surround it with the same picturesque pageantry of holy rites, or date from it a fresh departure so unmistakeable as theirs had been, he may be equally aware that a Divine Saviour has come near, and that the quickening breath of God has been about him with quiet and patient influence ever since he can remember. He too may know that he is not to-day what he once was, but better; less bent on pleasing himself, less irritable when provoked, less greedy of secular gain, less proud of his own virtue, less censorious to his neighbour's faults, less forgetful of his duties to God. To him also has his early dedication to Christ's service at the font proved to be a pledge of his baptism in the Holy Ghost, and of a renewal of nature not a whit less wonderful because it has been more gradual and gentle.

III. Consider, in the last place, whither this saving activity on the part of the Godhead is carrying such as surrender themselves to it. What is to be the outcome of his redemptive undertaking? In this alone, that the sinner is



justified freely by his grace? Is the release of the guilty from condemnation and penalty the issue of all that God has done in his kindness? No; but that, "having been justified, we should be made heirs." Acquittal is a splendid boon, and forgiveness is sweet. The peace of reconciliation to the Holy One is like a paradise restored to penitent souls. Yet the generosity of God has in reserve a nobler blessing. He calls us his sons. It is part of the good news, as St. Paul taught it, that the filial standing of saved men in the divine family is a result of their new birth of the Holy Ghost, and that sonship to God involves likewise a share in the divine life and glory as our everlasting inheritance. The successive steps by which this great theologian reaches that word "heirs" in the seventh verse are easy to trace by the help of other passages in his writings. The conversion of the Cretan believers has been described as their second birth. Birth of the Divine Spirit involves sonship to God Himself. The privilege of sons is to inherit; "heirs," therefore, of "life eternal."

The word is one which opens, as it were, a door into heaven. It is true that it is not yet apparent what the children of God shall hereafter be, for purity, for freedom, for wisdom, for felicity. But forth from that opened door, how there streams to meet us a radiance of the unseen glory, which in the twilight of this life-time dazzles our earthly eyes! For that undiscovered heritage of the saints in light, we can only hope. To this point, therefore, and no further, does the Christian Gospel conduct its disciple. Here for the present it leaves him, sitting patient and expectant by the gate of Paradise, to await, with stedfast heart, the moment that shall disclose to him his patrimony of bliss. While he sits and waits, shall he not behave himself as a child of God, and strive to grow more meet for the heritage of the holy?

J. OSWALD DYKES.

**"THE TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES."**

AN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN TREATISE, DISCOVERED AND EDITED BY PHILOTHEOS BRYENNIO, METROPOLITAN OF NICOMEDIA, 1883.

THE news that in the nineteenth century a treatise has been discovered which was written by a Christian who lived in the first century, excites a feeling both of deep interest and of extreme astonishment. It sounds almost too good to be true. We had begun to imagine that the libraries of even the remotest monasteries had been thoroughly ransacked, and that there was little hope that anything of really capital importance would again be brought to light. Two discoveries have of late years tended to revive hopes which almost sound extravagant. One of these is the Armenian version of the Commentary by Ephraem Syrus on the Diatessaron of Tatian. This has been published by the Mechitarist Fathers at Venice, and since it finally and decisively proves that Tatian's work was a harmony of all four Gospels, it furnishes a strong additional evidence in favour of the genuineness of the Gospel of St. John.<sup>1</sup> Another is the complete form of the letters of Clement of Rome. Others may easily follow, since this MS. remained unnoticed, though many scholars had visited the library in which it was found. Even those who look upon our religion from the outside cannot deny that, at the very lowest, the existence of Christianity is a stupendous historical phenomenon. It has loomed so large upon the minds of millions of men for many centuries and generations, and it has filled so vast a space in the thoughts, the controversies, and the interests of the human race, that even the profoundest sceptic must admit the importance of its earliest documents.

<sup>1</sup> This discovery disposes of the *ex cathedrâ* assertion of M. Renan that *Diatessaron* is a term of Greek music, and has no connection with the Four Gospels.

To Christians of all Churches the study of an ancient pamphlet—forgotten and lost for ages, but now rediscovered—a pamphlet which may have been written before St. John had lain for a decade in his grave, and by a writer who may have had personal intercourse with some of those "who had seen the Lord," can hardly fail to demand serious attention.

Alike by what it says and by what it omits, the little treatise must have an inevitable bearing on multitudes of controversies which have agitated the Church for many an age. It would at present be premature to attempt any estimate of the effects which this tract must insensibly produce. It will have to be searched with candles. Its history, its phraseology, its principles, its bearing on the growth of ecclesiastical institutions, its relation to the canonical books of Scripture, the position in which it stands to the most ancient forms of heresy, the explanation which it furnishes of the tendencies which led to Montanism, its contributions to the history of Church organization and Church doctrines, will all have to be settled hereafter, and co-ordinated with the fragmentary views which we deduce from Clemens Romanus, Hermas, Justin Martyr, and the sneers of Lucian in his life of Peregrinus. And this can only be done in course of time, when the book has been scrutinized, line for line and word for word, both philologically and historically by the labour of many minds. One thing, however, is certain—the book cannot be ignored.

My present task is a very simple one. It is merely to give an account of the treatise itself, and of this its *Editio Princeps*, published by a Greek Metropolitan last year—perhaps eighteen centuries after the hand that originally wrote it has crumbled into dust.

The book is edited by Philotheos Bryennios, Metropolitan of Nicomedia, and was published in 1883 by S. T. Boutyra, of Constantinople. It is called "The Teaching of

the Twelve Apostles," and was found in what is called "the Jerusalem Manuscript," which is numbered 456 in the library of the Patriarch of Jerusalem at Constantinople. The same MS. contains a synopsis of the Old and New Testaments by St. John Chrysostom, part of which has never before been edited; two Epistles of St. Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, one genuine and one spurious; the spurious letter of Mary of Castabola to St. Ignatius; twelve Epistles of St. Ignatius; and before the two latter writings this—*Διδαχὴ τῶν δωδέκα Ἀποστόλων*.<sup>1</sup> The actual manuscript is by no means ancient. It is dated June 11th, 1056. The scribe was a "notary and sinner" named Leo (*χειρὶ Λέοντος νοταρίου καὶ ἀλείτου*). Bryennios puts as a motto on the title-page a sentence from the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria:—"We must not, however, because of him who speaks also condemn ignorantly beforehand the things spoken, . . . but must examine things spoken, whether they pertain to the truth."

The actual treatise—the "Teaching"<sup>2</sup>—occupies fifty-five pages in this edition, but does not extend beyond some 300 lines, since the greater part of each page is occupied with footnotes. Two-thirds of the book are taken up by the Introduction, indices, etc., which are written throughout in modern Greek. Archbishop Bryennios is thoroughly familiar with recent theology, and although he complains of inadequate literary resources, quotes from Grabe, Tischendorf, Krabbe, Lagarde, von Drey, Hilgenfeld, Bickell, Harnack, Zahn, Lipsius, the writers in Herzog's *Encyclopædia*, and other German and English theologians. He is also well-read in Patristic literature, and especially (as is natural) in the writings of Athanasius and the Greek

<sup>1</sup> An account of the manuscript and its contents is given by Bryennios in his edition of the Letters of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, published by him in 1875.

<sup>2</sup> *Διδαχὴ* is translated "doctrine" in our A.V. and "teaching" in the Revised Version. I shall adopt the latter word in speaking of this book.

Fathers. He is already honourably known by his edition of the letters of Clement of Rome, published in 1875, when he was Metropolitan of Serrae. He considers that the publication of the "Teaching," with its revelation of the simplicity of doctrine and practice which prevailed in the early Church, will consign to complete oblivion much that has hitherto been written about the Apostolical age. I will proceed to lay before the reader some of the points with which he deals in his Prolegomena. His labours in producing this edition have occupied seven years.

The treatise now first published bears two titles, "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," and "The Teaching of the Lord by the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles."<sup>1</sup> The latter title is the one given to it by the original author; the other is only a shorter form of it.

Neither the Lord, however, nor the Apostles are introduced as speakers. The writer speaks in his own person and addresses the reader as "My child." Who the author was must remain for ever unknown, for he has not left us the slightest clue to his identification. Meanwhile the fact that he does *not* represent the Apostles as the direct authors—as is done in the Apostolical Constitutions, and in the "Epitome of the Decisions of the Apostles," and in all similar writings—is a proof of his simple good faith. He has not the least desire to be pseudonymous. He is so convinced that he is teaching the truths which the Apostles had delivered that he does not desire to put in a false claim of direct Apostolic authorship by way of enhancing the importance of his utterances. He stands above the need for adventitious emphasis and pious fraud. This is doubtless one reason why he made so favourable an impression on the ancient Fathers. St. Athanasius classes various books under the heads of "canonical," "apocryphal," "heretical," and "books that are read." By the latter books he means

<sup>1</sup> For the use of the word *Διδαχῇ* see Acts ii. 42; 2 John 9.

those of which the moral value had been publicly recognized by earlier authority; and among them he classes the book now before us. St. Clement of Alexandria had gone much further. He quotes the "Teaching" as Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

All that can safely be asserted of the writer is his piety, his good faith, his Christian simplicity, and his perfect orthodoxy. It is also clear that he belonged to the milder and less violently prejudiced section of Jewish Christians. He is by no means like "Barnabas," a vehement repudiator of the Jewish institutions, nor yet is he, like the Ebionites, an opponent of St. Paul. There is, it is true, no trace in his teaching of a single specifically Pauline doctrine. There is almost as total an absence of the technical terms of Pauline as of Johannine theology. On the other hand there is no expression which betrays any hostility to the views of the Apostle of the Gentiles, and there are possible—though not perhaps certain—allusions to one or two of his Epistles. But the writer's Jewish antecedents are indicated by his use of the phrase "*day and night*," which the Apostolical Constitutions alter into "*night and day*"; by his calling the "prophets"—*i.e.* the authorized preachers of the Church—"high priests"; by his remarks about first-fruits; by his allusion to the distinction of meats; and by his acceptance of weekly fasts on Wednesday and Friday in lieu of the "hypocrites'" fasts on Tuesday and Thursday. We may also be quite sure that he was not a Western Christian. We might have conjectured that he was an Asiatic, but for the absence of any decisive or indisputable traces of the writings of St. John. He may have written in Egypt or Syria, but the remark about the use of warm water in baptism has been thought to point to some district in which the winter was cold.

<sup>1</sup> The passage which he quotes as coming from "the Scripture" (ἡ γραφή) is, "My son, be not a liar; for lying leads to theft." Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, i. 20, § 100.

The readers whom he had in view are Jewish converts, and especially catechumens. He says that Baptism is to be administered after the candidates have been taught the truths which occupy his earlier chapters. Teachers and ministers are only addressed indirectly.

The only clue to the date at which so simple a moral and religious treatise was written, must be looked for in the state of church organization, and in the character of heresy or error to which the writer is opposed. As to the first point, the early date is proved by the fact that "Presbyters" are not mentioned, not having been as yet disintegrated from "bishops;" and that the title "Apostles" still retains its meaning of wandering emissaries. At the same time, the attempt to summarise the doctrines of the Twelve Apostles probably indicates that by this epoch even St. John was dead. The mention of "*the Twelve Apostles*," and the absence of direct references to St. Paul, are sufficient to prove that the writer had not come under the chief influence which moulded the destinies of Gentile Christianity. In all probability he was a Hellenist. As regards the dominance of particular errors, the writer recognizes the existence of "false prophets" who are guilty of greed, of immoral conduct, and of teaching doctrines opposed to those which he has set forth. These allusions are, however, far more vague and far less vehement than even those of St. Paul in the Pastoral Epistles, of St. John in the Apocalypse and his Epistles, and of St. Jude and the "Second Epistle of St. Peter." The learned Editor thinks that they are aimed at the Antitaktæ—Antinomians who embraced the views of Karpocrates, of the Balaamites, Nicolaitans, and other lewd and perverted sects which sprang from the views of Simon Magus, the traditional father of all heresies. To these heretics—who often falsely claimed Apostolical authority by forging books in the names of St. Peter, St. Thomas,

and other Apostles—the writer opposes the true “doctrine.” This view is possible, though it is one sign of the antiquity of the book that such teaching has not as yet assumed any very definite form. In the allusions to “false prophets” Bryennios sees a possible reference to the dawns of actual Montanism. This seems to be a little doubtful. Apart from the question whether the teaching of Montanus may not have been grossly misrepresented by his ecclesiastical opponents, I cannot trace the slightest allusion to any of his most distinctive views, nor is it conceivable that any one who wrote against Montanistic tendencies would have omitted every allusion to the existence of Priscilla, Maximilla, or those who preceded them as prophetesses of the sect. It is the supposed reference to dangerous proclivities which were ultimately developed into Montanism, together with his belief that the writer of the “Teaching” has borrowed from Barnabas and Hermas, which induce Bryennios to date the book between A.D. 120 and A.D. 160. On the other hand, we shall see, later on, that the borrowing was probably on the other side, and that the plagiarists are not our author, but Barnabas and Hermas. I can only with extreme deference give the impression which the study of the book has left on my own mind, and that is, that the treatise is the earliest Christian writing which we possess outside the canon, with the possible exception of the Epistles of St. Clement of Rome, of St. Polycarp, and of St. Ignatius.

The “Teaching” is frequently alluded to by early Christian writers. Eusebius († 340) classes it among “spurious” books with the “Shepherd of Hermas,” the “Epistle of Barnabas,” and the “Acts of Paul and Thecla.” Athanasius († 373) says that it was one of the books which the Fathers had recommended to be read by catechumens with the “Wisdom of Solomon” and other books of the Apocrypha. Niceratus († 820) mentions it among “apocryphal”



books, and says that it contained two hundred lines. There can be no doubt that these writers are referring to this treatise, which in the Jerusalem MS. contains two hundred and three lines. Clement of Alexandria (as we have seen) quotes as "Scripture" a passage which occurs in it. Rufinus, the learned Presbyter of Aquileia († 410), places it among the "*libri ecclesiastici*." It seems to be sometimes referred to under the title of "The Two Ways."

The *substance* of the book is not new, for it is entirely embodied in the so-called "Apostolical Constitutions," especially in the seventh book. Indeed, the previous six books of the "Constitutions," and also the eighth, are practically based on the short "Teaching." This might seem at first sight greatly to detract from its interest; but, on the contrary, the importance of the little book is really enhanced by these attempts to reproduce its substance. For we are thus enabled to contrast the widely different methods of handling identical and cognate topics in the first and in the fifth century. We can trace the growth and development of ecclesiastical teaching, and see the elements with which its primitive simplicity was gradually overlaid.

The "Apostolical Constitutions" profess to have been written down from the mouth of the assembled Apostles by Clement of Rome. They are thus as pseudonymous as they can possibly be. They are double-dyed with the spirit of the *falsarius*, which, after all palliations, remains an unhealthy spirit. There seem to have been several ancient books more or less similar in title, and referred to almost indifferently as "Teachings," "Introductions," "Ordinances," "Rules," etc., of the Apostles. Hence even our little treatise seems to be referred to by Eusebius in the plural. The existing "Apostolical Constitutions" are attributed by Bishop Pearson to the fifth, and by Archbishop Usher to the sixth century. The substance of the book

seems to have grown more or less by accretion, for a shorter form, called *Didascalia*, has been found in Syriac. Several critics—among them a writer in the *Christian Remembrancer* for 1854,—had already rightly conjectured that the "Constitutions" are the *rifacimento* of the ancient treatise to which Athanasius and others had referred; and this is, almost undoubtedly, the treatise which, after lying unknown for so many centuries, is now once more before us.

Bishop Bryennios has printed the seventh book of the Constitutions, and marked the passages taken from the "Teaching" in a different type. We are thus enabled at a glance to observe the differences between the two treatises. In the later work we find scarcely a trace of the genuine worth of the more ancient tractate. Its antique and venerable character, its naturalness and simplicity, its severe beauty, have disappeared in the hands of the later plagiarist. The "Constitutions" are diffuse where the "Teaching" is terse; and complex where the "Teaching" is simple; and ecclesiastical where the "Teaching" is religious. They expand the brief sentences of the original with needless verbosity, and explain it by a multitude of quotations. Where the "Teaching" describes with extreme simplicity the method of baptism, the "Constitutions" introduce unscriptural superfluities of holy oil and perfume. Where the Jewish Christian author of the "Teaching" is still so far entangled with Jewish tradition as to enjoin a bi-weekly fast, the "Constitutions" add a timid suggestion about fasting every day in the week, except Saturday and Sunday. The simple eucharistic formulæ of the "Teaching" are greatly expanded in the "Constitutions." The uninitiated, *i.e.* the unbaptized, are of course forbidden to eat of the Lord's supper; but the "Constitutions" add that, "if any unbaptized person conceals himself and partakes of the Lord's supper, he will eat eternal judgment, because, though he is not of the faith of Christ, he partakes

of what is not lawful, to his own retribution. But if any one should partake in ignorance, initiate him with all speed after elementary instruction, that he may not go forth as a despiser."

There is no trace of unguent or myrrh-oil in the "Teaching," but in the later book it is introduced into the administration of the Eucharist, as well as into Baptism. The "Constitutions" talk about "Priests," (*ιερείς*) which is a title never given to ministers in the "Teaching," any more than it is in the New Testament. We also meet with "tithes" and with Presbyters as distinct from "Bishops." These are not mentioned in the earlier book, which speaks only of Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, "Bishops" and Deacons. In the "Constitutions," too, we have the extravagant and entirely unscriptural super-exaltation of Bishops which began before the close of the second century. They are described in a page of sounding eulogies, and Christians are told "to honour them with all kinds of honour" and "to honour them as the Lord;" whereas all that the "Teaching" had said was, that "the Bishops and Deacons minister for you the ministry of the Prophets and Teachers. Do not therefore despise them, for they are the honoured among you with the Prophets and Teachers." The "Teaching," indeed, in alluding to the Prophets, *i.e.* the authorized and inspired preachers (not the "Bishops"), uses a metaphor very natural to a Jewish Christian. "The prophets," he says, "are *your* High Priests," in other words, your ministers in Divine things, and—though they are distinguished from the class of Bishops (*i.e.* Presbyters) and Deacons—they occupy among you a post of honour like that of the High Priest among the Jews. It cannot but be clear to every candid reader that there is no sacerdotalism here. The Prophets offer no "sacrifices" but are simply teachers; and yet they are to be supported because Christians were to honour them as the Jews did their Chief Priests. The

"Constitutions," however, seize on the metaphor with avidity, though the author of the "Teaching" had obviously no intention to give to Christian ministers that title of "Priests" which the Apostles and Evangelists expressly withhold from them, and confer only upon every member of the Christian community. The "Constitutions" use the word "Bishops" in a different sense from the older writer; call them "Levites"; say that they are to receive "tithes"; and further on designate the Bishops "Chief Priests," the Presbyters "Priests," and the Deacons "Levites." "Deaconesses" are mentioned in the "Constitutions," but not in the "Teaching."<sup>1</sup>

My own reading of the Teaching led me to infer that the learned editor has placed it too late, and to suppose that it must have been written about the year 100 A.D. I have since ascertained that eminent German scholars have come to the same conclusion. It seems probable that the general verdict of scholars will ultimately adopt this view. We have already seen that Bryennios thinks that it was written between A.D. 120 and A.D. 160, and appears to be convinced that the author of the "Teaching" copied from Barnabas and Hermas. But facts seem to shew that, on the contrary, those two writers copied from him. Compare for instance the following passages:

"TEACHING," Chapter 1.—"There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between the two ways. The way of life, then, is as follows:—First, thou shalt love God who made thee; secondly, thy neighbour as thyself; and all things whatsoever thou wouldest not wish to be done to thee, do not thou to another."

Compare this with the Epistle of BARNABAS, chapter 18, where I have italicized the additional words and clauses. "But let us also pass to another kind of knowledge and

<sup>1</sup> In Romans xvi. 1 the title of Phœbe is ἡ διάκονος. In later times the word *διακονισσα* was invented.

teaching. There are two ways of teaching and of authority, that of light and that of darkness, and there is a great difference between these two ways. For over one have been appointed the light-bringing angels of God, and over the other the angels of Satan. And the One is Lord for ever and ever, and the other is prince of the present season of lawlessness.

Chapter xix.—The way of light, then, is as follows, if any one wishing to travel to the appointed place is zealous in his works. The knowledge, then, which is given to us for walking in this way is as follows : Thou shalt love Him who made thee, thou shalt fear Him who formed (πλάσαντα) thee, thou shalt glorify Him who redeemed thee from death ; thou shalt be simple in thy heart and rich in thy spirit. Thou shalt not be united with those who walk in the way of death."

Or contrast one or two other clauses.

"TEACHING," chapter 5.—"But the way of death is as follows :—First of all it is evil and full of curse ; murders, adulteries," &c.

BARNABAS, chapter xx.—"But the way of the Black One is crooked and full of curse. For it is the way of eternal death with retribution, in which are the things which destroy their soul, idolatry, audacity, loftiness of power," etc.

Or, once again,

"TEACHING," chapter xvi.—"Ye know not the hour in which your Lord comes. But ye shall frequently gather yourselves together, seeking the things which profit your souls. For the whole time of your faith shall not profit you unless ye be perfected in the last crisis. For in the last days false prophets shall be multiplied," etc.

BARNABAS, chapter iv.—"Therefore let us take heed in the last days. For the whole time of your life and of your faith shall profit you nothing, unless now in this lawless season, we also withstand the scandals that are to come as becometh the children of God. That the Black One may find

*no means of entrance, let us, etc.—coming together unitedly, inquire together about your common advantage."*

I cannot help thinking that most readers of any literary insight and experience will incline to the view that the simpler, less verbose, and less artificial language of the "Teaching" must in all such passages be regarded as the earlier of the two. If so, the plagiarist or adapter—though what we call plagiarism would not connote much blame in those primitive days—was Barnabas, and not the pious and apostolically minded Jewish Christian who wrote the "Teaching." The same remark applies quite as strongly to the three passages of the Mandates of Hermas, which contain clauses identical with those of the "Teaching." The stamp of simplicity usually marks the earlier of two similar compositions.

I will now give a brief account of the little book itself. It will be seen that in reading it we might almost fancy ourselves to be reading one of the simpler New Testament Epistles. It lacks indeed the indefinable note of "inspiration" which we find in the sacred books; but on the other hand it is not so immeasurably inferior to them in dignity and sweetness as are some of the early Christian writings.

Chapter I. In this chapter, after saying that there are two ways, the one of life and the other of death, the writer begins with the utmost simplicity to describe the way of life. The substance of the description is borrowed almost entirely from the Sermon on the Mount. There are however two points of interest; one is the stern warning to those who take alms when they do not need them. In this there is perhaps a reference to a saying ascribed to "the Lord" in the Apostolical Constitutions<sup>1</sup>: "Woe to those who have and who receive in hypocrisy, or to those who are able to help themselves and prefer to receive from

<sup>1</sup> *Apost. Constt.*, iv. 3, sec. 1.

others. For each shall render an account to the Lord God in the Day of Judgment." The other peculiarity is the quotation with which the chapter terminates: "But respecting this also, it has in truth been said, 'Let thine *alms sweat* (*ἰδρωσάτω*) *into thy hands, as long as thou knowest to whom thou givest.*'" Whether this quotation is an "unrecorded saying" of Christ, to be reckoned with the other *ἀγράφα δόγματα*, we cannot tell; but the phrase, "*it has been said,*" implies that it is taken from some source which was accounted sacred. The importance attached to wise and discriminating charity is emphasized in the Apostolical Constitutions, and it is interesting to find that the Church was thus early on its guard against the peril of promiscuous dole-giving.

The following chapters, from the second to the sixth, are also occupied with a description of "The two ways." The way of life consists of moral precepts and of warnings against heathen sins and vices, both moral and intellectual, which still were prevalent. The duties of giving, of honouring our spiritual teachers, and of general confession are also inculcated.

The way of death is a list of crimes and vices, and this section of the book ends with the remarkable words: "See that no man cause thee to err from the way of teaching, since he teacheth thee apart from God. For if thou art able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou shalt be perfect; but if thou canst not, do what thou canst. But as regards food, bear what thou canst; but keep thyself strenuously from food offered to idols, for it is the service of dead gods."

In these last words, some may see a retrogression from the broader and more liberal teaching of St. Paul, whose view was that the eating of idol-offerings was in itself a matter of absolute indifference, and that the only need to abstain from it was in cases where there was some danger

of wounding weak consciences. Fundamentally however there is no difference in the teaching. By the time that the *Διδαχὴ* was written, as still more markedly in the days of Justin Martyr, the active antagonism of Pagans, and the temptation to escape persecution by compliance, had caused the partaking of idol sacrifices to be regarded with far deeper abhorrence than in the days of St. Paul. Any relaxing of the rigid rule might have proved a direct temptation to apostasy and to unhallowed compromise.

Since these chapters were meant for the instruction of catechumens preparatory to Baptism, the writer in the 7th chapter plunges at once into the method of Baptism. It is to be performed, if possible in running ("living") water; if not, then in warm water; and if neither are procurable in sufficient quantity for immersion, then water is to be thrice poured on the head in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The candidate is to fast the previous day or two days. This last remark is another proof of the early date of the treatise. It shews that in speaking of Baptism the writer is mainly thinking of converts and of adults.

This leads the writer to the subject of fasting. It is not to be Pharisaic, nor on the Jewish days, Tuesday and Thursday, but on Wednesdays and Fridays. Nothing can more clearly prove that the bi-weekly fast is a Jewish-Christian Survival. The Pharisees had taught, as a part of their oral law, that Jews should fast on Monday, the day on which Moses was supposed to have ascended Sinai, and Thursday, the day on which he descended. Accustomed to this traditional observance—which is nowhere sanctioned or suggested in the New Testament, and to which the sole allusion in the Gospels (Luke xviii. 12) is by no means favourable—the Jewish Christians substituted for it a fast on Wednesday, the day of the Betrayal, and Friday, the day of the Crucifixion. The Lord's prayer is



to be repeated thrice a day. The form here given varies very slightly from that in St. Matthew. The doxology is shorter—"For thine is the power and the glory for ever." Debt (ὀφειλὴν) is used for "debts" (ὀφειλήματα), and "heaven" (οὐρανῷ) for Matthew's characteristic word "heavens" (οὐρανοῖς).

The 9th and 10th chapters give directions about the administration of the Eucharist. The thanksgiving for the cup is offered first, and begins, "We thank Thee, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David thy Servant (παῖδος) which Thou madest known to us by Jesus thy Servant. To Thee be the glory for ever." A similar thanksgiving is next offered for the Bread.

The questions raised by this interesting description are far too important to be lightly dismissed. It is however deeply interesting to see that the words, "This is my Body," "This is my Blood," were not used at this epoch; and even if, with Prof. Wordsworth, we conjecture that this may have been due to a determination to give no colour to the gross heathen misrepresentations which charged Christians with mysterious orgies and the murder of a child (παῖδος—the word meaning ambiguously both "Son" and "Servant"),<sup>1</sup> still, in the words of consecration—perhaps the oldest liturgical forms which have come down to us—we find no shadow of any doctrine distantly resembling transubstantiation, no conception of any participation which is not purely and absolutely spiritual. Nothing can more clearly prove that the use of the term "sacrifice," metaphorically applied to the Eucharist in the 14th chapter, has the same meaning as our own use of the term in our Communion Service—"this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving."

<sup>1</sup> This use of the word, as applied both to David and to Christ, is in the New Testament confined to St. Luke, with whose writings the author seems to have been familiar.

The 10th chapter ends with the words, "But allow the prophets to give thanks after the Eucharist as much as they like." This elasticity in public worship—this emancipation from liturgical rigidity of those who had the grace of inspired teaching—might create difficulties in the present complexities of ecclesiastical organization, but was in itself entirely desirable.

The third section of the book, from the 11th to the 16th chapters, deals with questions affecting the ministry. The points of interest which it offers are too numerous to be here thoroughly dealt with. The tone of the directions implies an age of apostolic poverty and simplicity, when a man was to be regarded as a "false prophet" if he asked for money, or if, being a wandering missionary, he stayed in hospitable quarters over the second day. A "prophet" who "ordered a table" (for a Love-feast?), was not to partake of it himself. He was never to take with him more bread than would suffice till he reached his quarters for the night. Precautions are suggested against all idlers and "Christ-traffickers." Bishops and deacons are to be "appointed" by the Christian bodies themselves, and a provision is thus made by which an Apostle or itinerant teacher can be changed into a resident minister. There is in the 11th chapter a curious expression of which the meaning is, as yet, uncertain. "But every proved genuine prophet *who makes assemblies for a worldly mystery* (ποιῶν εἰς μυστήριον κοσμικὸν ἐκκλησίας),<sup>1</sup> but does not teach others to do what he does, shall not be judged by you, for he hath his judgment with God; for so did also the ancient prophets." Bishop Bryennios confesses that this clause is "dark and obscure" to him, but explains it of the public exhibition by prophets of symbolic actions. No explanation yet offered seems to be quite satisfactory.

The last chapter is an exhortation to be ready for the

<sup>1</sup> The translation as well as the meaning is uncertain.

second coming of the Lord. It contains a warning against "the world-deceiver," who shall appear as a Son of God. The word "Antichrist," is not used, but the thoughts seem to be coloured by Matt. xxiv. 3-14, and perhaps by 2 Thess. ii. 1-12. "Then shall the race of men come into the fire of probation, and many shall be offended and shall perish; but those who abide in their faith shall be saved *ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ καταθέματος*." These words possibly mean "under the very curse"; but Bryennios supposes them to imply "by Him whom they curse," or "by Him who is the Foundation." "And then shall appear the signs of the truth. First, the sign of the flight (of the saints, *ἐκπετάσεως*) in heaven (or possibly, 'of Christ with arms outspread, as on the cross'); then the sign of the voice of the trumpet; and the third, the resurrection of the dead; not indeed, of all, but as is spoken—'the Lord shall come, and all His saints with Him.' Then shall the world see the Lord coming above the clouds of the heaven."

Space does not permit me to say anything more about this remarkable little treatise, which will do much to revive many of the most interesting problems of early Church history. I must not however omit to say one word about the quotations. They too suggest considerations of the utmost importance; and on the whole they accord with what we might expect of a Jewish Christian, writing possibly in some Church of little prominence at the close of the first century.

In the first place, the large majority of his scriptural references seem to be made from memory. The Gospels with which he seems to be best acquainted are those of St. Matthew and St. Luke. The main allusions to St. Matthew are to the Sermon on the Mount or to the closing chapters. Scarcely one of them is verbally accurate, which implies that the writer did not actually possess a manuscript of the Gospel, and had not one at hand for the purposes of exact

quotation. There is no decisive reference to St. Mark or to any of the writings of St. John. It cannot be said with absolute certainty—so at least, it appears to me—that he was acquainted with any of the Epistles of St. Paul. There are one or two passages which bear a resemblance to the first and second Epistles to the Thessalonians; but on the other hand, as will be seen from the last extract, the writer is not in close accordance with, if not absolutely discrepant from, the first Epistle in the order of events at the Second Coming. Indeed, unless “abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts” can be regarded as a proof that he was acquainted with the first Epistle of St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 11), it cannot be *proved* that he was familiar with any part of the New Testament, except one or two of the synoptic Gospels. I make this remark however with all reservations, because the quotations and phraseology require a more thorough examination than they have yet received. The resemblances to passages in the Epistles are of so general a character, that it cannot, I think, be positively asserted that they imply acquaintance with the canonical books, though they appear to do so at first sight. So far as I have observed there is no decisive reference, and indeed no reference at all, to any of the Antilegomena, or books of which the canonicity was in early days a matter of dispute. On the other hand, the writer, as was natural in the case of a Jewish-Christian, seems to have known the Book of Ecclesiasticus, to which there is at least one indisputable allusion.

FREDERIC W. FARRAR.

*THE GROWTH OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE  
RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AMONG  
THE JEWS.*

VII. THERE are other Pseudepigrapha which we might examine with reference to our subject, such as The Assumption of Moses, The Psalms of Solomon, The Apocalypse of Baruch, The Sibylline Books, and The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, but I refrain from handling them, partly from fear of making this investigation too lengthy, and partly from the difficulty of assigning correct dates to many of these documents and dissevering the genuine text from Christian interpolations. These difficulties do not occur in the case of Philo-Judæus. This writer, who flourished about the time of our Lord, has many speculations concerning the soul, its origin, its nature, and its destiny, but he is entirely silent about the resurrection of the body, whether this reticence expressed his own disbelief in the doctrine, or merely a disinclination to offend the prejudices of the heathen philosophers to whom he endeavoured to recommend the Hebrew religion by accommodation, refining and allegory. He holds that all souls pre-exist, living in the air which is thus peopled with its own inhabitants. Some of these, having earthly downward tendencies, enter into material bodies, from which, if they live a virtuous, contemplative life, they soar again to heaven, and are called in Scripture Angels, and by the Greeks Demons and Heroes.<sup>1</sup> The death of the soul is its corruption, the reception and assimilation of evil. Arrived at this stage it is, as it were, entombed in the body, and is punished either with it or without it, for Philo in this, as in many other points, is inconsistent and

<sup>1</sup> Philo, *De Somn.*, i. 22. (vol. i. pp. 641, 642, Mang.); *De Gigant.*, 2, 3. (vol. i. pp. 263, 264).

unsatisfactory.<sup>1</sup> But he nowhere mentions the restoration of the body. He speaks indeed of Palingenesia in reference to the whole man, *εἰς παλιγγενεσίαν ὁρμήσομεν*,<sup>2</sup> but he never explains this except by his notion of the entrance of some souls into human bodies.

Josephus is not a satisfactory witness as to the belief and tenets of his contemporaries, inasmuch as his statements are biassed by his desire to make them acceptable to the Greeks and Romans, the outside world for whom he wrote. To them the doctrine of the Resurrection appeared especially strange and paradoxical. Hence in his references to it Josephus employed ambiguous terms which would lead one to believe that he held the transmigration of souls. Thus in describing the three chief sects among the Jews, he affirms of the Pharisees that they believed that the souls of good men passed into another body (*μεταβαίνειν εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα*); and in his own speech to his soldiers he assures them that those who die honourably and piously, are rewarded with everlasting happiness, and inhabit a holy place in the heavens,<sup>3</sup> whence after the revolution of ages they are introduced into other pure bodies (*Bell. Jud.*, III. viii. 5; II. viii. 14). In another place (*Ant.*, XVIII. i. 3), speaking of the Pharisees, he says that they believe that the souls of men are immortal, and that after death they receive, under the earth, punishment or reward, according as they have addicted themselves to virtue or vice in their lifetime, the evil being bound in eternal confinement, the good rising to life again.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Leg. Alleg.*, i. 83 (vol. i. p. 65).

<sup>2</sup> *De Cherub.*, 32 (vol. i. p. 159).

<sup>3</sup> As Josephus places all souls in Sheol, by οὐρανοῦ χώρον τὸν ἀγιώτατον he means probably only a part of this locality. If this is so, this will be an interesting mention of the Division of Hell with which the Parable of Dives and Lazarus has familiarized us. The last portion of the passage to which reference is made is this: *ἐνθεν ἐκ περιτροπῆς αἰώνων ἀγροῖς πάλιν ἀντενοικίζονται σώμασιν*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ταῖς μὲν εἰργμὸν ἀίδιον προστίθεσθαι, ταῖς δὲ ῥαστώσῃν τοῦ ἀναβιοῦν*.

Whether by the last expression Josephus means the restoration of life to the body is doubtful. Holding the soul to be a portion of the Divinity (*μοῖρα Θεοῦ*), imprisoned for a time in a mortal tenement, he probably encouraged rather a Platonic view of the material body, and published no definite statement about its final destiny, using ambiguous words to express the popular opinion. His account of the Essenes scarcely handles the question of the Resurrection. This sect, he says,<sup>1</sup> held that the soul was immortal, being composed of the most refined æther, and that it was drawn down to the body, as to a prison, by a certain natural yearning (*ἐν γὰρ τινι*), but that when delivered by death from this bondage, it soared aloft and was made happy in Elysium. He brings an instance of the moral effect of their belief in the future life, how that, in the war with the Romans, though tortured with extreme cruelty, they could not be induced to break their law, but bore their agonies with a smile and joyfully yielded up their souls, as being confident of receiving them again.<sup>2</sup> Taken strictly, these last words would imply the Resurrection; but we must allow the studied ambiguity to stand for what it is worth, and we do not know from other sources the exact opinion of the Essenes on this doctrine.

VIII. We have now arrived at the Christian era, when, as we have seen, the doctrine of the Resurrection had become firmly established in the popular mind, and Christ could speak of it without reserve, feeling that to many among his hearers the idea would be intelligible and acceptable. Travelling outside of the New Testament, we find the dogma prevailing in distant lands whither the Jews had carried their religion and exclusiveness. A remarkable collection of Jewish monuments has been discovered in the Crimea, the inscriptions on which have been copied and

<sup>1</sup> *Bell. Jud.*, II. viii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ἐσθνμοὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἠφίεσαν, ὡς πάλιν κομιοῦμενοι.* *Bell. Jud.*, II. viii. 10.

published by Chwolson in *Memoires de l'Académie Impériale de St. Petersbourg*.<sup>1</sup> Similar inscriptions occur elsewhere; many of like character may very probably be found in Palestine and Babylon, as they certainly exist in Italy written both in Greek and Latin. Those in the Crimea date from A.D. 6 to A.D. 960; and when we consider the time that must have elapsed before so distant a settlement could have been peopled by the Jews, we must conclude that the sentiments expressed on these memorials of the dead had prevailed long before, and appertain to a period much antecedent to their actual date. The common use of contractions also in the lettering of the inscriptions tends to shew that the blessings and prayers thus abbreviated had become popular and usual. One of the earliest runs thus: "May his soul be fast bound in the bundle of life, and may his resting place be in glory." (Comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 29.) Others are the following: "May he go in peace and rest in his bed." "May his rest be in Paradise in glory." "May his soul dwell in happiness."<sup>2</sup> "Blessings on him at the mention of the dead." And one which was intended to have special reference to the Resurrection: "May the dew go up over his resting place"; for the Rabbis taught that the resuscitation of the dead should be effected by a heavenly dew which should fall upon their graves and quicken their dust into life.<sup>3</sup> We see here how firm a hold the doctrine had taken upon the Hebrew mind, shaping and enlightening the imperfect tradition and the vague yearnings of earlier times, so that it is difficult to mark any distinction between the aspirations on the tombs of Christians and Jews in those primitive ages. The same fact can be observed in the catacombs of Rome. There is an ancient Jewish burying-place in the Vigna Bandanini, the inscriptions in which were transcribed and published by

<sup>1</sup> VII. Série, Tom. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xxv. 13.

<sup>3</sup> See Isaiah xxvi. 19. Comp. Exod. xvi. 14. Chwolson, p. 90 ff.



Raffaelle Garucci in 1862.<sup>1</sup> These are all, with, I believe, but one exception, written in what purports to be Greek or Latin, but is really a mixture of barbarisms, anomalies and errors which is wonderful. The Greek inscriptions are engraved in uncial letters of course without accents. They are such as these: **ΕΝ ΕΙΡΗΝΗ Η ΚΟΙΜΗΣΙΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ. ΕΝ ΑΓΑΘΟΙΣ ΜΕΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΔΙΚΕΩΝ Η ΚΥΜΗΣΙΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ.** And in Latin: "Dormitio tua in pace." "In Domino," or "in irene cymesis tua." "Dormitio tua inter dicaeis." There is one in Hebrew given by Garucci which may be thus translated: <sup>2</sup> "In the fourth day of the week, the 21st day of the month July, in the year 4914 of the creation, died the Rabbi Jacob Ben-Ezekias, chief elder, being seventy years old, one month. . . . May his soul be joined to the bundle of the living, and may he live with the just in the world to come. Amen. Amen." Another is remarkable as asking for the prayers of readers in behalf of the dead person: **ΕΝΘΑΔΕ ΚΕΙΤΑΙ ΙΩΣΗΣ ΤΟ ΝΗΠΙΟΝ ΗΔΥΝ ΕΤ Β Η Μ** [—aged two years eight months] **ΠΡΟΚΟΠΙΣ Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΚΡΙΣΠΑΙΝΑ ΔΕ ΜΗΤ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΟΙΟ ΕΝ ΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΤΗΝ ΚΟΜΗΣΙΝ** [*sic*] **ΑΥΤΟΥ.**<sup>3</sup>

IX. There is another testimony to the belief of the Jews to be found in their Liturgies and forms of Prayer. Some of these have been handed down from pre-Christian times, and were, it is stated, in use in our Lord's day, as they have continued to be employed unto the present.<sup>4</sup> The following quotations from Burial Services published by authority,

<sup>1</sup> *Cimitero degli Antichi Ebrei scoperto recentemente in vigna Bandanini.* Roma, 1862.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 28, 29. There is an interesting article on such inscriptions in *The Edinburgh Review*, July, 1864.

<sup>3</sup> *Nuovi Epigr. Giud. di vigna Bandanini*, p. 8. *Edinburgh Review*, ubi *supr.*, p. 246.

<sup>4</sup> See the authorities in Dr. F. G. Lee's work, *The Christian Doctrine of Prayer for the Departed*, p. 30 ff. Jer. Taylor, *Liberty of Prophesying*, Bk. i. § 20.

will shew how vivid and practical is their realization of the great doctrine. "Thou who raisest to life again the departed, have mercy upon him who lieth here." "Thou who art our succour and defence, redeem the soul of thy servant who putteth his trust in Thee." "Thou, the light of the living, and the glory of those who sleep, raise him up again in thy mercy."<sup>1</sup> One of the most ancient of all these prayers is the following: "Thou sustaineest the living, Thou comfortest the dying, Thou raisest up again the departed. . . . redeem the posterity of thy faithful servant A., whether they have departed this life or are still in the flesh. Raise them up again, Thou who delightest in life; write their names in thy book, and grant them life everlasting." So in a Form for the evening service for the New Year: "Thou, O Lord, art mighty for ever; it is Thou who revivest the dead and art mighty to save. . . . Thou settest at liberty them that are bound, and wilt accomplish thy faith unto those that sleep in the dust." So too in an ancient ritual of the Spanish Jews used at funerals, for the souls of the dead: "Have pity on him, O Lord, living God, Master of the Universe, with whom is the source of life, that he may always walk in the way of life, and that his soul may repose for ever and ever with those elected unto life everlasting."<sup>2</sup>

X. While thus the Jews firmly believed in the Resurrection of the dead, it was no universal resurrection that they held. Maimonides summarized the doctrines of Judaism in thirteen articles, which he calls "Foundations or roots of faith," and which every Jew is required to believe on pain of excommunication. The last of these is this: "I believe with a perfect faith that the dead will be restored to life, when it shall be so ordained by the decree of the Creator."<sup>3</sup> This general statement was considerably modified by glosses

<sup>1</sup> Lee, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Lee, pp. 85, 86.

<sup>3</sup> J. Allen, *Modern Judaism*, 2nd edition, 1890, p. 99.

and explanations. Some said that all should rise except those who affirmed that the Law was not from heaven, or that the Resurrection could not be proved from the Law.<sup>1</sup> Whenever the Resurrection is spoken of, said others, it refers exclusively to the rising of the blessed to inherit everlasting happiness, for it is the indwelling of the Spirit which raises men to immortal life, and He abides not with the evil.<sup>2</sup> It was constantly maintained that no Gentiles, but only pious Israelites, would rise; or that good Jews would arise at the coming of the Messiah, and the rest of the nation at the end of the world; or that the righteous would rise to be rewarded, the wicked to be punished, and those neither good nor bad would not be raised at all. The most that was granted in the case of Gentiles was that those among them who observed the Noachic precepts might have part in the Resurrection, those precepts being seven in number, viz.: Not to commit idolatry; not to blaspheme God's name; to practise justice towards all men; not to be guilty of incest; not to murder; not to steal; and to eat no member of a living creature.<sup>3</sup> The agent in the raising of the dead was expected to be the Messiah. In remarkable union with the famous passage in 1 Peter iii. the Jews held that Messiah would descend into hell and free the souls of Israelites from that abode of gloom for the merit of circumcision; He would bring them all to earth again, except those who denied the Resurrection or had imbibed the pernicious doctrines of Epicurus.<sup>4</sup> It was believed that the bodies of pious Israelites would come forth glorified from the places wherein they had been laid and would be joined to their souls. This was deemed to be *q̄*

<sup>1</sup> Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.*, in Mat. xxii. 29. So in St. Paul's time the Pharisees seem to have generally believed in the resurrection of the just and unjust. See Acts xxiv. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Schoettgen, in Joh. vi. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Allen, p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> Bertholdt, *Christologia Judæorum*, p. 171 ff.

*ἀνάστασις τῶν δικαίων* or *ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη*. After Satan is defeated and cast into hell, then shall arise all the rest of men who are descended, however remotely, from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.<sup>1</sup> But the speculations on this subject are various, and we need not pursue them in detail. They are alluded to here merely to shew how the doctrine of the Resurrection has penetrated the schools of the Rabbis and influenced their eschatology. The teaching of the Jewish Church of the present time is thus given in one of their popular text books<sup>2</sup>: "I believe with a perfect faith that there will be a resurrection of the dead, at the time when it shall please the Creator." This is the thirteenth of the creeds or chief principles of the Jewish religion, which all Jews are required to receive; and it is grounded on the vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel. It is further now argued that at that period, not Hebrews only, but all mankind will alike be brought to judgment according to the prophecy of Malachi (iii. 18): "Then shall He return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."

WILLIAM J. DEANE, M.A.

<sup>1</sup> Bertholdt, *Christologia Judæorum*, pp. 176, 203.

<sup>2</sup> *Class Book for Jewish Youth*, by Rev. H. A. Henry. London: 5638—1877. pp. 90, 91.

## EZEKIEL—AN IDEAL BIOGRAPHY.

### IV.

THE portion of the prophet's work on which we now enter (Chapter xvi.) is, with its companion picture in Chapter xxiii., one of those on which the reader looks with mingled feelings of fascination and repulsion. The terrible nakedness of its imagery shocks those who are accustomed to the euphemisms which had their birth in the emphatically Christian modesty which looks on sexual sins as things not even to be named, and which reproduces itself in the conventional decencies of those even who are without that modesty, and who tolerate the sins themselves. We must not, however, judge the prophet by a standard not his own. A man living in the midst of a fathomless debasement is stirred, as Juvenal and Persius were stirred, by a *sæva indignatio*, which will not let him veil the abominations against which he has to bear his witness. He must make men see themselves as in a mirror which will shew them to their own gaze in all their hideous deformity. Stroke after stroke, line after line, is added to the picture, till it is complete in all its loathsomeness. What strikes us as revolting in such a picture is in itself neither corrupt nor corrupting. The prophet does not speak *virginibus puerisque*, but to men and women in many of whom conscience has been seared as with a red hot-iron, and the sense of shame deadened, so that they needed to be roused to a new activity by the very sight of their own shamelessness.

In the main thought which is expanded with this dramatic fulness Ezekiel was following, as elsewhere, in the footsteps of Jeremiah. He too had painted the early days of the

Divine betrothal, of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel, as at once his people and his bride. "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness" (Jer. ii. 2); and had reproached the faithless wife of Jehovah, for "the lightness of her whoredom," whereby she had "defiled the land" (Jer. iii. 9). It is as though the later prophet had brooded over that thought till the germ developed itself into a long history, which reminds us, in its turn, of that strange sad story which meets us in the first three chapters of Hosea, as at once a biography and a parable. The opening words must have sounded strange in the ears of those who boasted of their descent from the patriarchs, who thought that they were the children of Abraham, the friend of Jehovah. "Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite" (Ezek. xvi. 3). The prosaic literalism of some commentators has led them to see in the prophet's withering scorn the statement of an ethnological fact—Jerusalem had been originally, they urge, a Jebusite, *i.e.* a Canaanite city. Hittites and Amorites were found among the *colluvies gentium* that dwelt in her, before she became the city of David, the capital of Judah. To one who has any capacity for entering into the thoughts of a poet, it will be obvious that Ezekiel speaks of the spiritual, not the physical, parentage; not of the material city, but of what we may describe as the Church and people that dwelt in it. The opening words testify to the sense of *heredité*, which lies at the root of almost every modern form of Eastern scorn and reviling. Jerusalem was as heathen in its life as the Hittite wives whom Esau married, and who were a "grief of mind" to Isaac and Rebecca (Gen. xxvi. 35); as the Amorites whose iniquity was not yet full when Abraham came into Canaan (Gen. xv. 16). The picture that follows, full of details of that which in modern literature, save perhaps in the

terrible realism of writers of the Zola-type, we relegate to the region of the indescribable, may possibly have been drawn from the life. A childbirth on the march of the exiles from Jerusalem to Chebar, followed by the death of the mother, would have presented just such features as Ezekiel describes. The usual offices of the midwife were left undone. The infant lay in "its blood," neither washed nor, after the custom of the East, at once sanitary and symbolic, rubbed with salt. Had the prophet looked on such a sight and taken the part which he assigns to Jehovah, and saved the child from the death which a few hours more of neglect would have brought on it? Had he said "Live," when to have said nothing, done nothing, would have ended life? (Ezek. xvi. 6). Historically the period thus described answers to the early sojourn of Israel in Canaan and Egypt, and it presents a striking parallelism to the language put into the mouth of every Israelite as he offered his first-fruits: "A Syrian ready to perish was my father" (Deut. xxvi. 5). The growth of the infant to the maturity of womanhood corresponded, in like manner, to the sojourn in Egypt, during which the tribe grew into a nation, and, as such, attracted once more the pity and the love of Jehovah. There was in that full-grown womanhood much that was loveable, but the taint of evil was still there. There was still the squalor of filthiness and blood. After the manner of the East, Jehovah, who loved her, threw his mantle over her, with a symbolism which was half that of adoption and half of betrothal, as Boaz spread his garment over Ruth (Ruth iii. 9).<sup>1</sup> This was followed by the cleansing and anointing that prepared the betrothed maiden for the marriage, of which we find an illustration in the elaborate purification of Esther and the others

<sup>1</sup> Ewald illustrates the practice from the German law term, *Mantelkind*, used of an illegitimate child adopted after the marriage of the father with the mother, or with another woman.

who were selected as candidates for the place from which Vashti had been deposed in the court of Ahasuerus (Esth. ii. 3, 9, 12). Then came the adornment of the bride in the day of her espousals, which the prophet describes, as with a conscious and elaborate symbolism, in terms that correspond with the decorations of the tabernacle and the priesthood. There was the "brodered work," the "raiment of needlework" (as in Exod. xxvi. 36, xxviii. 39, xxxvi. 37), the badgers' skin (possibly seal-skin) of Exod. xxv. 5, xxvi. 14, the "fine linen" or byssus turban, which appears in Exodus xxix. 9; Leviticus viii. 13, as the "bonnet" of the high priest. What follows is more distinctively feminine, the dress of a queenly beauty, of a bride "adorning herself with jewels," as in Isaiah lxi. 10, the bracelets, the nose-rings, the ear-rings. The luxury and pomp of the Davidic and Salomonic rule are painted under the image of the "fine flour, and honey and oil," which were the food of the queenly bride who sat as "a princess among provinces" (Lam. i. 1), and the "renown of whose beauty went forth among the heathen," as did that of the glory of Solomon. And then came, in the parable, as in the history, the immediate and terrible downfall. In words which remind us of Juvenal, the prophet paints the degradation of a spiritual Messalina, prostituting herself to every passer-by, adopting, *i.e.* the idolatry of every nation with which she came in contact, lavishing on them all the glory and beauty and wealth which had been given her by her true Lord for his own glory, slaying even her children and making them to pass through the fire that she might gratify her insatiable craving for the excitement of a new worship. Every "eminent" or *arched*<sup>1</sup> building on the high places of Israel was spiritually—often indeed, as in the worship of Astarte and the Asherah,

<sup>1</sup> The agreement of this meaning of the word with the received etymology of the word "fornication" is a curious though accidental coincidence.



literally—a place polluted by whoredoms. The history that followed, the apostasy which began under Solomon and left its taint through the later centuries, is described under like imagery. Judah and Israel had adopted the idolatries of Egypt, grosser and more bestial than that of any other nation, and this had been followed by famine and weakness, so that even the daughters of the Philistines, as, *e.g.* in the days of Ahaz (2 Chron. xxviii. 18) had risen and prevailed against her (Ezek. xvi. 26, 27). Then had come, as also under Ahaz, the Assyrian alliance and with it the adoption of Assyrian worship, such as that of Ishtar the “queen of heaven” (Jer. xlv. 17). Within Ezekiel’s own memory there had been a fresh addition to the confluent polytheism of Jerusalem. Intercourse with, and subjection to, Babylon had brought in the new fashion of Chaldean worship, to say nothing of the Thammuz ritual of Syria and the adoration of the sun which we have seen as dominant, in Chapter viii. And then with a bitter irony the prophet points out that, in one respect, the sin of the guilty city differed from that of the literal harlot. The latter had, at least, the hire, from which in most languages her evil calling received its name; but Jerusalem had no profit of any kind to set against her sin. Her whole course had been one at once of outward and spiritual degradation. She had, as it were, courted her lovers and paid them the rewards of her own infamy. And, therefore, there was to come upon her the punishment of faithless wives. She was to be stoned as they were stoned (Lev. xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 21–24), to be stript of her garments and her fair jewels, and to be left once more naked and bare, and to be thrust through with the sword. So, and not otherwise, would the jealousy of the Divine Bridegroom depart from her so that He “would be quiet and be no more angry” (Ezek. xvi. 42). The chastisement was sent in love, as it had been sent on her sisters Sodom and Samaria.

For them also the door of hope was open, though "pride and fulness of bread and abundance of idleness had been in them and in their daughters" (Ezek. xvi. 49). The prophet, with that inextinguishable trust in the compassion and long-suffering of Jehovah which characterized him, as it had characterized his brother-prophets, looked forward to a time when they also should "return to their former estate," and then she would "remember the days of her youth," and He would remember the covenant He had made with her in those days, and she should receive the elder and the younger sisters in whose evil ways she had trodden, they also being forgiven and restored, though not in the same measure as herself, and should accept her punishment and her shame, and be joined to her Lord once more in an everlasting covenant, "not opening her mouth any more," but silent, as in a repentance too deep for words, resting in the assurance that He who had so severely punished was at last "pacified towards her" (Ezek. xvi. 44-63). In their bold utterance of the wider hope the words remind us in part of Isaiah's prophecy of blessing as coming, after punishment, upon Egypt and Assyria (Isa. xix. 24, 25), in part also of those which declared that if Tyre and Sidon had seen the works which were done in Capernaum, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes, and that therefore there should be for them a more tolerable judgment (Matt. xi. 22). It may be questioned whether there is anywhere, even in St. Paul's thoughts of the restoration of Israel, in Romans xi., so startling a contrast between the immediate future of punishment, and the ultimate triumph of compassion. Jerusalem, that had fallen to lower depths of shame than either Sodom or Samaria, was one day to be again joined to the Lord of Israel, as in the day of her espousals, and the two cities of evil fame were to be to her in that day as "the virgins that were her fellows and should bear

her company" (Ps. xlv. 14). To the mind of the Israelites of the prophet's time the revelation of the Divine purpose, thus given, must have seemed as strange as that which St. Peter gives of the work of Christ as "preaching to the spirits in prison," of the gospel being "preached even to the dead" (1 Pet. iii. 18, iv. 6) that they may pass through judgment unto life, has often seemed to Christian interpreters.<sup>1</sup>

I have suggested that the elaborate parable of which this is the conclusion, may have had its starting-point in the incidents of Ezekiel's journey to the land of his captivity. It seems to me probable that the imagery that follows in Chapter xvii. may have had its origin in recollections of the same journey. The cedar "is confined in its geographical distribution to Asia Minor, coming south as far as Lebanon. It does not reach Palestine proper and should not be included among the trees of that country" (Carruthers, in *Bible Educator*, vol. iv. p. 358). The "great eagle," probably the golden eagle (*Aquila Chrysaetos*), was not common there, being found for the most part in the northern mountain regions" (Houghton, in *Bible Educator*, vol. ii. p. 294). But both cedars and eagles may well have come before the prophet's gaze on the slopes of Lebanon as the exiles took their weary way to Babylon, and what he saw may have suggested, at the time, or when it came back

<sup>1</sup> Keil's note is, I think, worth copying as bearing on the much-vexed question of our time. "And from this it clearly follows that all the judgments which fell before the time of Christ, instead of carrying with them the final decision and involving eternal damnation, leave the possibility of pardon open still. The last judgment, which is decisive for eternity, does not take place till after the full revelation of grace and truth in Christ. Not only will the gospel be preached to all nations before the end come (Matt. xxiv. 14), but even to the dead, who did not believe at the time of Noah, it has been already preached, at the time when Christ went to them in spirit, in order that, although judged according to man's way in the flesh, they might live according to God's way in the Spirit." Keil's *Ezekiel*, vol. i. p. 235, in Clark's *Foreign Theological Library*. Compare also the present writer's *Sermon on The Spirits in Prison* (Isbister & Co.).

upon his memory afterwards, the parable on which we now enter, and which must have had a prominent place in the minds of the "rebellious house" when they said of their teacher, "Doth he not speak parables?" (Ezek. xx. 49). Guided by the prophet's own interpretation we can fix, without the shadow of a doubt, the meaning of each detail. What we know of his training and environment, of the imagery of Hebrew literature and Assyrian symbolism, may help us to yet fuller illustration. The poetry of all nations has seen in the eagle, as the strongest of birds, the natural symbol of the rulers of mankind. So Jeremiah (xlviii. 40, xlix. 22) had already spoken of Nebuchadnezzar under that image, and Isaiah (xli. 11) had compared the yet future Cyrus to "a ravenous bird from the East." So in the *Agamemnon* (l. 114) of Æschylus the two eagles that are seen hovering over their plundered nest answer to the leaders of the Argive host. Here, however, there was a special ground for Ezekiel's choice. The eagle-headed figure which appears so frequently on the Assyrian monuments, and which has been identified by Layard (*Nineveh*. vol. ii. p. 458) with the god Nisroch—the name, according to one etymology, meaning the "great eagle"—must have often met his eyes, so that he saw in it the emblem of the Assyrian monarchy, to the inheritance, and to the name, of which Babylon had succeeded; and that symbolism he recognises in the opening words of his parable. The "great eagle with great wings, long pinioned, full of feathers which had divers colours" (Ezek. xvii. 3), is none other than Nebuchadnezzar as the king of many "peoples, nations, and languages" (Dan. iii. 4, 7). The "cedar of Lebanon" was, as it had been before to Jeremiah, when he spoke of the "king's house of Judah" as "the head of Lebanon" (Jer. xxii. 6), the type of the dynasty of David; partly, perhaps, because the palace of the kings of Judah was so largely constructed of cedar-wood as to be known as

"the house of the forest of Lebanon" (1 Kings vii. 2), and partly also, because the more recent sovereigns had kept up the tradition by building palaces that were "ciled with cedar" (Jer. xxii. 14). Ezekiel could hardly fail to have heard or read the words in which the contemporary prophet had spoken to Jerusalem, the royal city, as the "inhabitant of Lebanon that made her nest in the cedars" (Jer. xxii. 23). The top of the highest branch of the cedar which the eagle cropped was, accordingly, none other than the last king but one of the house of David; Jehoiachin, whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried into captivity into "a land of traffick (literally, *of Canaan*), a city of merchants," *sc.* to Babylon, as the great emporium of Eastern commerce. As in Chapter xvi. 29, the prophet plays upon the secondary meaning of Canaan, as signifying "merchant," and applies it to the city of which it had been said that it was "a golden city" (Isa. xiv. 4). But the work of Nebuchadnezzar did not end with the deportation of Jehoiachin. He had set up Zedekiah as king in his stead, and that fact also had to be stated in symbolic language. The eagle took up the "seed of the land," of the home-born stock of the house of David. It grew, first, "as a willow by the water-courses," and then as "a spreading vine of low culture," which "brought forth branches and shot forth sprigs" (Ezek. xvii. 5). In the other great eagle which next appears on the scene we find the rival monarchy of Egypt, less composite in its character, and therefore without the varied feathers of the first. To that eagle the vine turned its branches. In other words, Zedekiah sought to strengthen himself against Nebuchadnezzar by an alliance with Pharaoh Hophra, the king of Egypt. Of that alliance Ezekiel, following in the footsteps of Jeremiah, could see no good result as possible. He asked the question, as the mouthpiece of Jehovah, "Shall it prosper?" and made answer to himself, "Shall he not

pull up the roots thereof and cut off the fruit thereof that it wither?" (Ezek. xvii. 9). There was no need of "great power, or of many people to pluck it up." It would waste away in its own inherent feebleness, "when the east wind toucheth it." Zedekiah, instead of accepting his appointed position as the vassal king of Nebuchadnezzar, had rebelled against him, and sent his ambassadors to Egypt; but the outcome of it all would be that he should die "in the midst of Babylon," and Pharaoh, with "his mighty army and great company," his "mounts" and his "forts" for sieges, should not avail (Ezek. xvii. 17). Exile and imprisonment should be the doom of the rebellious vassal. But beyond that doom there lay the hope of a restoration, which he conveys in the same symbols as those with which he started. Not now the "great eagle," the Chaldean king, but the Lord God Himself should take yet another of the highest branches of the high cedar, and plant it upon a high mountain, and it should bring forth boughs and bear fruit and be a goodly cedar, and under it should dwell all fowl of every wing, and He who had dried up the green tree should make the dry tree to flourish (Ezek. xvii. 23-25). That was Ezekiel's version of Isaiah's thought, that there should come forth "a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and that a Branch should grow out of his roots" (Isa. xi. 1), that "the mountain of the Lord's house should be established in the top of the mountains" (Isa. ii. 1). We trace something like an echo of the thoughts and of the phrase, translated and transfigured to a higher meaning, in the words which spoke of the kingdom of heaven as like the grain of mustard seed which should become a tree, "so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof" (Matt. xiii. 32).

The Chapter that follows presents a striking contrast to all that has gone before it. There are no visions of the glory-cloud, and the living creatures, "the cherubim," and

the wheels within the wheels; no elaborate parables like those which we have just now examined. The prophet finds himself face to face with one of the great problems of the Divine order of the universe. He heard it in the cynical fatalism, or the self-excusing apathy, of his countrymen. He heard it also, we may believe, in the whisper of his own heart. What were the limits, in modern phrase, of the law of *heredité*? How far were the sins of the fathers visited upon the children? That there was such a "visiting" all experience shewed. It was asserted as one of the most solemn sanctions of the Divine Law (Exod. xx. 5). He, as we have seen, had been trained under a teacher who had given him the right answer as in germ and in outline (Jer. xxxi. 29). When he heard the proverb which men used in exile, as at home, concerning the land of Israel, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezek. xviii. 2), he knew, taught by the word of Jehovah which developed that germ and filled up that outline, what to reply, and how to deal with it.

The problem was one which has at all times tried the souls, and laid heavy on the hearts, of devout thinkers. Not far from the time at which Ezekiel lived we find it exercising the minds of the poets and historians of Greece. There was the thought of Herodotus that the Divine Power was, in quite another sense than that of the Hebrew faith, a "jealous God" (*φθόνερον τὸ θεῖον*) envious of man's success, afraid of his independence, aiming his thunderbolts at the loftiest trees simply because they are the loftiest (*Herod.* i. 32, iii. 40), smiting the pride of over-boastful kings, and infusing a panic-terror into their armies, seeing that "He does not will that any but himself should be exalted" (*Ibid.* vii. 10). That thought was not without its truth as a law of the Divine government, and it finds utterance in the prophets of the Old Testament, notably in the

language of Isaiah to Sennacherib (Isa. xxxvii. 29), and of the confession of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 37). With this there mingled in the mind of the Greek historian the thought that the sins of the fathers were visited on the children, so that the punishment, *e.g.* which fell on the sons of Spertias and Bulis, who had offered themselves as victims to atone for the murder of the Persian envoys of Xerxes by the Spartans, seemed to him of all the facts he had known to be the most marvellous instance of Divine interposition (*Herod.* vii. 137). The latter rather than the former thought commended itself to the mind of Æschylus as in harmony with a true conception of the Divine government. The idea of a transmitted curse, an *Atè* passing from sire to son through many generations, lies at the root of all, or almost all, his dramas. It was not prosperity itself that brought disaster, but the wanton reckless haughtiness which prosperity engendered. The sequence of evil might always be traced to the fountain-head of some sin which might have been avoided; but which, once committed, went on with accelerating force. At every stage each evil act received its just recompense of reward, but that very recompense was brought about through the instrumentality of a fresh transgression, waiting in its turn for punishment. The "woes of Atreus' line," the curse that rested on the house of CEdipus, the misery of Troia, are all referred to a root-sin which remained unrepented and unatoned for. Even in this approximation to the thought of a righteous order the Greek poet felt himself almost as an *Athanasius contra mundum* in protesting against the Herodotean view of the Divine jealousy.

"There lives an old saw, framed in ancient days,  
In memories of men, that high estate  
Full-grown brings forth its young, nor childless dies;  
But that from good success  
Springs to the race a woe insatiable.



But I, *apart from all*  
*Hold this my creed alone ;*  
For impious act it is that offspring breeds,  
Like to their parent stock ;  
For still in every house  
That loves the right, their fate for evermore  
Hath issue good and fair."

*Agam., 727-737.*

But with this there was the thought of which the *Eumenides* of the great trilogy is the supreme utterance. The entail of curses might be cut off. The Avengers might become the Gentle Ones. *παθεῖν, μαθεῖν*—"pain is gain," *παθήματα, μαθήματα*—"sufferings are schoolings," was stamped in the mint of his mind as one of the generalized lessons of experience. And so he stands at least on the threshold of the higher truths which it was given to the prophet on the banks of Chebar to proclaim in its fullness.

I have dwelt at some length on this unconscious parallelism because it helps us, if I mistake not, to understand the thoughts of the prophet as he pondered over the proverb which represented Israel as swayed by an inherited curse, bearing the punishment of the sins of an earlier generation. That punishment was for correction and not destruction, that pain may be the truest gain, he had already taught when he declared that in the latter days men should acknowledge that God "had not done among his people without cause all that he had done in it" (Ezek. xiv. 23). Now from that truth he passes on to the higher conception of the responsibility, and therefore of the freedom, of each individual man. Men should have no occasion to use the "sour grapes" proverb any more in Israel. No facts of *heredité*, no apparent visitation of the guilt of many generations on the head of one, was to stand in competition with the great law as uttered in the words, "Behold all souls are mine ; as the soul of the father, so

also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. xviii. 4).

I do not care to enter fully into the grounds which led the prophet to enumerate the transgressions of the law which the righteous man avoids, and which bring condemnation on the evil-doer. To us he may seem to mix up the ethical and the ceremonial, the laws of the Ten Commandments with the precepts of Leviticus. I cannot doubt that the prophet's words were not without a purpose and a meaning. Sins against purity of worship, sins against purity of life, whether those sins did or did not involve the violation of another's rights, or shewed only the mastery of appetite over reverence and self-control, sins of violence and fraud, the sins of the oppressor and the usurer, of hardness and unpitying selfishness, these he grouped together because he found them all eating, like a canker, into the nation's life, and his very training as a priest led him to put away the reticence which would have hindered him from mentioning any of them, or made him stop short in his catalogue of abominations. What it is well to know is the distinctness with which he proclaims, as one who was the preacher of a gospel pre-evangelized, the eternal Love which was ready evermore to welcome and forgive the penitent. In words as clear as those of St. Paul, when he taught that "God willeth all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4), as those of the Christ when He proclaimed that it was not "the will of his Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 14), Ezekiel was led to utter as an oracle of God that which has been the burden of every true evangelist: "Why will ye die, O house of Israel? . . . I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live" (Ezek. xviii. 32).

And it is not without significance in its bearing on other

and even deeper controversies that the prophet recognizes, in those to whom he speaks, the existence of what has been called a "verifying faculty," the power, and therefore, with the power, the right and the duty, to judge of what claims to be a revelation of the mind of God, according to its conformity with the standard of right which conscience has been taught to recognize. When he seeks to vindicate the ways of God to man, he takes for granted that men may and ought to judge whether his vindication is satisfactory. He, at all events, would have shrunk from defending the *horribile decretum* of a predestination to evil and to punishment simply on the ground that men may not question the Divine Omnipotence, or that their thoughts on justice and equity are no measure of the meaning of those words as applied to Divine Acts. As Abraham had asked of old, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25), so Ezekiel, with all the freedom of a living faith, puts into the mouth of God, as an answer to those who murmured that the way of the Lord was not equal, the question, "O house of Israel, are not my ways equal, are not your ways unequal?" (Ezek. xviii. 29). Because they were so, he could add that the Lord would judge those who so murmured; on that ground he could invite even them to repentance and reformation. He had offered in his love to give them "one heart and a new spirit" (Ezek. xi. 19), but they were to be fellow-workers with God in that great work, and were, on their side, to make for themselves "a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezek. xviii. 31). In this as in other things he anticipated the teaching of an age of fuller illumination, and the words spoken on the banks of Chebar find their echo in St. Paul's earnest appeal, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do" (Phil. ii. 13); and the ground of that appeal was found by the prophet as

by the Apostle, in the thought of the "good pleasure" of the will of God, which finds its satisfaction in life and not in death, which is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9).

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

### THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT.

#### II. CORINTHIANS V. 5.

ST. PAUL opens this verse by saying, "Now he that wrought us up for this very thing is God." What is this very or selfsame thing? *What* is the end which God has in view in all that He does in, and for, and upon those who walk by faith and not by sight? It is, as we are told in the previous verse, that "mortality may be swallowed up of life." *This* is the end He has set before Him, and keeps before Him,—that all which is mortal in us, all that *can* die, may be lost, absorbed in, transmuted and glorified by that in us which cannot die.

And *when* is this end to be reached? It is to be reached, as we also learn from the previous verse, when this mortal shall have put on immortality, when we shall be clothed upon with the white raiment of a spiritual and imperishable life, when the frail tenement of our mortality has been replaced by the house of God, the building not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.

1. The first thought suggested by this passage is, therefore, that our true life does not and cannot consist in that which is mortal, or perishable, in us. So far from consisting in that of which death may rob us at any moment, our true life is, according to the holy Apostle, hampered, clogged, restrained, thwarted by our mortality. It groans

under the limitations imposed on it by this tenement of clay. It cannot rise to its proper freedom and perfection until it has shuffled off this mortal coil. Whoever may find "in matter the promise and potency of all things," St. Paul finds in matter, even where it is most finely organized, even in "the miraculous organs" through which the spirit of man utters and reveals itself, even in "the temple of this body," an antagonist to be subdued and conquered. Whoever may reduce life to a mere result of organization, or a mere function of the brain, St. Paul detects in the brain, and in the senses by which the brain is brought into contact with the world around us, that which limits, that which betrays and thwarts, our true life. According to him, all that is mortal in us is a burden which our true life, the life of the spirit, has to bear, a burden which costs us many sighs and groans; and it will never be well with us until even that which is mortal is penetrated, suffused, transfigured by the energies of this inward life, and the spirit dwells and moves in a form as vital and as immortal as itself.

2. And *this* is the end which God has in view for us; mortality is to be swallowed up of life, that which is mortal in us by that which is vital. We are to lose nothing—how should we lose anything?—by becoming perfect. The whole man, body and soul, form as well as spirit, is to be saved unto life everlasting. All the redeeming energies of God's love and grace have it for their aim to consummate and perfect our inward life, our true life, to make us of one will and of one heart with Him; and when this aim is reached, the life of the spirit, the life which He has made perfect, will, by its own interior and inherent force, fashion for itself a body appropriate to itself, "a spiritual body,"—swallowing up that which is mortal, shedding into it the power of an endless life, weaving out of it a body as pliant to all the influences and conditions of the spiritual world

as this mortal body is to all the conditions and influences of the present visible world.

It is a great promise, a great hope ; but, great as it is, it is perfectly reasonable, perfectly consonant with the facts of our daily experience. Day by day the outward form and vesture of our life changes, and changes into a closer correspondence with the spirit which inhabits it. Our present bodies are the same, yet not the same, that we have had from our birth. Science itself affirms that amid the constant flux of the particles of which our bodies are composed, some hidden type, or law, or specific form, which gives them shape, remains unchanged, or changes only as the spirit within us changes. We do not lose our identity though we die daily, and daily rise again from the dead. And if the spirit remain after death, we shall not lose our identity then, nor the power of appropriating a body from the materials at hand and of giving them an appropriate shape. For as life goes on, and character settles and unfolds, we can see how, here and now, even this muddy vesture of decay accommodates itself to the character of the spirit which animates it ; so that even this mortal body, ever changing, grows to answer more nearly to, more adequately to correspond to and express, our individuality and bent. We are the same from infancy to age ; and yet through how many changes we pass, each more individualizing and expressive of the inward man than the last. And if, under all these physical changes, *that* in us which thinks and feels and wills remain the same, why should the physical change of death touch or impair our personality ? If through all these changes *we* have grown more spiritual, and have shaped our very bodies into more adequate and readable expressions of the spirit which resides in them, why should we not retain this mysterious but indubitable power through one change more, even though it be that which we call the last ?

O, it is not the mere identity of particles, nor the mere resurrection of relics, for which we look, and of which St. Paul here speaks; but that we ourselves, in our several individualities, shall survive the stroke of death, and as readily adapt ourselves, in body as well as in soul, to our new and larger conditions,—putting on a nobler and more spiritual body in the nobler and happier conditions of the new and more spiritual world into which we shall then pass and rise!

In short, the hope which the Apostle sets before us is, that, after death, we shall be the very men we were before death, still preserving the personal identity which has already survived so many changes; but that, as we ourselves shall rise into a higher life, we shall clothe ourselves there, as we have done here, with a body which, while it corresponds to and expresses our individual character, will also correspond to and express the higher spiritual life on which we have entered.

3. How, then, shall we best prepare ourselves for this great change? No doubt we best prepare ourselves for it by a growing spirituality; in proportion, that is, as we walk after the spirit and not after the flesh; in proportion as we cherish large thoughts, pure and kindly emotions, high and noble aims—in a word, heartfelt devotion to the will of God. For, as St. Paul here reminds us, we reach the true spirituality, not by mortifying the flesh, but by fortifying the spirit. According to him, death is not, as we sometimes conceive it to be, simply the liberation of the soul from the body, but the transition of the spirit into a more spiritual body. He does not long to be “unclothed,” but to be “clothed upon.” Simply to escape from the frail and hindering tent of mortality will not satisfy his large desires; but only the assumption of an immortal vesture, the transition into an eternal building. In other words, he groans and yearns for a spiritual life so pure and strong, that it will

vitalize and spiritualize the very body itself, and make it meet for all the uses and enterprises of a higher nature and a higher world. He believes that as there is a Divine ideal for the spirit of man, so also there is a Divine ideal for the body of man; and that only by attaining an ideal perfection of spirit can he attain an ideal perfection of body.

And thus he corrects another error into which men are apt to fall. For if there are some who would materialize the very spirit that is in us, accounting our highest life no more than a function of the brain, there are others to whom matter is the source of all evil. To be delivered from this body, and from *every* body, is, for them, the only hope of life and peace. Only as they macerate and mortify the flesh, with its appetites and lusts, do they expect to enjoy any measure of peace here; only as they utterly and for ever escape all contact with material forms do they hope to enjoy a deep unbroken peace hereafter. To be condemned to wear a body, any kind of body, in the world beyond the grave would be, as they think, to be condemned to the old struggle with evil and imperfection of which they are weary and ashamed.

Not thus, however, not by mortifying and punishing the body, but by cultivating and invigorating the spirit till it can subdue the body and change it into its own substance, are we, according to the Apostle, to enter into the fulness of life, whether in this world or in that which is to come. His prescription for the nature diseased and enfeebled by sin is not, "Starve the body," but, "Feed the spirit." And thus he goes straight to the very root of the matter. For, after all, it is the spirit, it is the indwelling life, which gives form and shape to the body, which animates it and moulds it to its own likeness.

Does any man ask: "But how are we to feed and cherish the spirit?" I reply, "You would not need to ask that question did you but remember what you yourself



have seen and felt in hours of insight. For there come hours to us all in which we see that the ordinary aims of men are not their true aims. When you have stood in the wilder solitudes of Nature, or have had to contend with its ruder forces—wind, storm, excessive cold or heat or rain; when you have been called to suffer a great loss, or to endure a piercing sorrow, or to stand face to face with death; whenever, in short, you have been made to feel your own weakness, and how vain was the help of man, you have seen clearly enough what it was to live and walk after the spirit, and that you ought to do it. You have seen that to acquaint yourself with great truths and make them ever present and ever governing facts, to get a pure and kindly heart, to be reconciled to God and to make his will your will, to live for others rather than for yourself, for that which is spiritual and eternal rather than for that which is sensuous and temporal, to reach an unwavering trust in God, to study how to do good and to do the most good you can,—you have seen that these and the like are the true and highest ends of life, the ends for which you ought to live, since, if these be gained, you are saved from all want, all fear, all harm, and can meet whatever may come. And you have only to carry these ends, which in hours of insight you have seen to be the only true and satisfying ends of life, into your daily round and common task. Do but that, and *you* will be living in the spirit, and walking after the spirit, *i.e.* you will be fortifying and cherishing your spiritual life—the life that will give form and colour to your whole nature, to both body and soul, whether in this world or in any other.”

4. “Do but that !” a whole chorus of voices may sadly exclaim; “but it is precisely *that* which we find it impossible to do, try how we will. Day by day, year after year, we have been striving to live in the spirit and to walk by it, to pursue the pure and lofty aims of which we have

caught glimpses—glimpses which have filled our souls with love and strong desire—in our best moments, our highest moods, when we have stood nearest to God and heaven. And yet, what are we the better for our long endeavour and quest? We have not *reached* the aims we have pursued; and now, foiled and weary, we no longer expect to reach them. We cannot give up the quest indeed; for it is better to live for the highest ends, though they evade while they allure us, than to sink into a base content with vulgar and inferior ends. But what hopeless work it all seems!

The better men are the more likely are they to speak thus, to think ill of themselves, to despair of ever becoming what they fain would be, what they cannot but strive to become. Low aims are soon reached; but high aims have a strange trick of eluding us, of receding as we advance, of rising as we climb. And if our aim, being a high one, seem to be wholly beyond our reach; if, still pursuing it, we are nevertheless faint and hopeless in our minds—as so many of us are, St. Paul has a great hope, a great inspiration for us. For he assures us that our aim for ourselves is *God's* aim for us; and that, whatever we may think or fear, it is God's purpose and intention that we shall reach it. He assures us that it is God's will that, in us, life should gain the victory, and not death; and that, therefore, all that is mortal in us shall be swallowed up of life. "*God,*" he says, "*has wrought us up for this very thing*" which, to us, seems so hopeless. And what he means, what his words imply, is, that it is no one less than God who, by the discipline of the very struggle and endeavour through which we are now impelled to take our way, is training and preparing us for a life so perfect, so vigorous and intense that, having renewed the spirit in us, it will at last penetrate the very flesh and transform that into its own similitude, so making us of one

piece or substance throughout. The verb he employs—*κατεργασάμενος*, "*wrought us up*,"—implies effort, implies difficulty and resistance in the material on which it operates—the very difficulty and resistance of which we are so conscious that we well-nigh despair of ourselves. But be the resistance what it may, and however insurmountable the difficulties may be, or seem to be, God—who has not overlooked one of these—purposes to overcome them; and his purpose standeth sure, standeth fast. Nothing can turn Him aside from it. And what is there that He cannot do? All things are possible with Him, even our salvation, even our perfection. We may despair of ourselves indeed, and so throw one more difficulty in his way; but what are difficulties to Him? And yet how can we despair of ourselves when we know that *He* is working for the very end for which we are working, and that He means to reach it; that it is his fixed and eternal design to make us perfect, to feed and replenish our life till it can change even our mortal body into a living and immortal habitation of the spirit?

5. Is not *that* enough to inspire us with new courage and new hope, to set us on following the loftier aim we have set before us with a more steadfast and assured heart? If not, let us draw from the Apostle's words still another, and perhaps a more tangible and potent, incentive. For St. Paul not only gives us a hope of what shall be, by disclosing the purpose and intention of God, he also refers us to what *is*, to a fact of our own experience which he teaches us to interpret aright. By our own confession we *are* trying to live and walk after the spirit, however hopeless we may be of ever reaching a full and all-pervading spiritual life. But what set us on following so high an aim as this, when so many of our fellows are content to walk after the flesh? What is it that has made us to differ, not from many of our fellows simply, but also from our former

selves? For to walk after the spirit, *i.e.* to feed and cherish that which is spiritual in our nature, was not always our aim, or was not always our chief aim. How came it to be our aim, then? Whence did we derive the impulse that has so long led us to pursue an ideal which yet we have not been able to attain? Whence but from the Heaven to which we aspire? Whence but from the God whom we feel to be our chief good? It is *his* Spirit which has quickened our spirit, and made it impatient of all inferior aims. It is *his* Spirit which has sustained and impelled us in our pursuit of the highest good, and rendered it impossible for us to abandon that pursuit even when it seems most hopeless.

But if we admit that it is the Spirit of God which has moved us to pursue an aim which we should not have chosen had we been left to ourselves, and would not have continued to pursue when it seemed quite out of reach, let us learn from St. Paul how we are to regard, how we are to interpret, this action of the Divine Spirit on our spirit. According to him, this action or gift of the Spirit is "*an earnest*"; *i.e.* as the word (*ἀρραβών*) implies, it is both a present possession—something in hand, and a pledge of a larger inheritance to come. "Now he that hath wrought us up for this very thing," *i.e.* to have that which is mortal in us swallowed up by that which is vital—"is God, *who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.*" The Apostle is not content to inspire us with hope of the final victory of life, by assuring us that it is God's intention to give us that victory, that it is this for which He is working; he also confirms the hope by an appeal to what we have already received. That the Spirit of God has already quickened any measure of life in our spirit is the pledge that the life of our spirit shall one day be perfected, and that it shall one day penetrate and transform even the life of our body.

So that we are not altogether suspended on hope. We have something in hand, and something that guarantees our hope. For the word "earnest" (*ἀρραβών*) means something more than "pledge": it means that part of the very thing promised to us is already given us. My word, my bond, may be a pledge that I will one day confer a certain estate on you. Meantime, you cannot live on a mere bond or word. But if I give you "an earnest" in St. Paul's sense, I give you at once, not a word or a bond, but a part of the estate itself, which you *can* live upon and enjoy from the very moment you receive it, and on which you may lean as a guarantee that the whole estate will in due time be yours.

In giving us his Spirit to quicken a new life in our spirits, therefore, and to set us on pursuing new and higher aims, God gives us more than a mere promise that we shall hereafter enter into the full enjoyment of a perfect spiritual world, something more than the pledge of a life wholly free from any intermixture of death; though *from Him* even these would be much. He gives us *part* of that life, part of that world, for our present use and enjoyment, and in the part a sure and certain guarantee of the whole. For if in any measure we already possess the very Spirit of God, if *He* is really at work within us under whatever limitations and restraints,—is not the true spiritual life in that measure already ours? And if God has in any measure quickened that life in us, and holds stedfastly, as the Apostle declares, to the intention of making it ours perfectly and for ever,—have we not something more than a word of promise, something more than a hope, to go upon? In the Spirit of God, in this *gift* of the Spirit, we have part, and the best part, of the promised inheritance; and in that part a true "earnest" of the whole. He who has given us his own Spirit,—is He likely to withhold from us the spiritual body or the spiritual conditions in and through which alone

our quickened and 'renewed spirits can work happily and happily express all that is in them? He who has given us his Spirit, shall He not with Him freely give us all things that pertain to life and godliness? The gift we already possess—is not that the surest pledge, the strongest guarantee, that all which is necessary to complete the gift will be added unto it?

In fine, I know no verse in the New Testament richer in strength and consolation for as many of us as are apt to despond of themselves, if not to despair. As we enter into its meaning, we may well take courage and brush away our fears. We *have* the Spirit of life within us or we should never have been quickened to new life and new aims; and in that Spirit we have an infallible proof and assurance that at last, even in us, mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

S. Cox.

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### CALVIN AS AN EXPOSITOR.

It must be admitted that Calvin is not an attractive figure in the history of the Reformation. The mass of mankind revolt against the ruthless logical rigidity of his "*horribile decretum*," and dislike the thought of the theocratic sacerdotalism which he established at Geneva. Above all, they find it impossible to forgive him for the judicial murder of Servetus. It may of course be pleaded, that in that deed of persecution, he only acted in accordance with the views of his own day, and that his conduct throughout the bad business was approved even by the mild and shrinking Melancthon. But the fact remains that Calvin has never inspired a tithe of the affection which has been lavished on the memory of the more passionate, genial, and largehearted Luther. It has been felt that in many respects he gave us back the

tyranny and arrogance of Romanism, and illustrated the truth of Milton's bitter complaint that

"New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large."

It is perhaps in consequence of these feelings that Calvin's immense merits as an Expositor have been somewhat grudgingly recognised. Richard Simon in his *Histoire des Commentateurs*, while he admits that apart from dogmatic views Calvin's commentaries would be useful to all the world, yet betrays his dislike by the exceedingly unjust and demonstrably false remark, that Calvin only knew Greek moderately, and knew no more of Hebrew than the letters.<sup>1</sup> E. W. Meyer complains of his masterful dogmatism as detracting from the value of his exegetic works.<sup>2</sup> Winer, in the first two editions of his *Commentary on the Galatians*, did not mention his name, though in the third he praises his subtlety, perspicuity, and insight. Bayle, however, does him full justice as "a man on whom God had conferred great talents, much wit, an exquisite judgment, a faithful memory, a pen solid and eloquent, indefatigable toil, great knowledge, great zeal for truth." Even Scaliger exclaims, "Oh, how excellently does Calvin attain to the meaning of the Prophets—no one better!" One of the reasons which Pole in the preface to his *Synopsis* assigns for not frequently referring to him is, that Calvin's successors have borrowed from him so largely that to quote from them is to quote from him. In modern times he has been generally and justly regarded as the greatest exegete of the age of the

<sup>1</sup> R. Simon, *l.c.* p. 747. To avoid overlaying the notes with references, I may mention that in writing this article, besides the Prefaces and Commentaries of Calvin, I have consulted R. Simon, Klausen, *Hermeneutik*, 227 *fg.*; Meyer, *Gesch. d. Schrifterkl.* vol. ii. pp. 448–475; Diestel, *Gesch. d. Alt. Test.* pp. 289–290 *fg.*; Reuss, *Gesch. d. Heil. Schrift. Neu. Test.* § 569, etc.; Dr. Beard's *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 258 *fg.*; Tholuck, *Vermischte Schriften*, ii. 330–360; Bungener, *Life of Calvin*; Dyer's *Life of Calvin*; the article on Calvin, in Haag, *La France Protestante*; and especially Merx, *Joel*, pp. 428–444.

<sup>2</sup> *Gesch. d. Schrifterklärung*, vol. ii. p. 450.

Reformation. His commentaries are at the present day far more frequently consulted, and are indeed far better worth consulting, than those of Melancthon, Zwingli, or even Luther. They still live, while those of Musculus, Chytræus, Brentius, Bugenhagen, Baldwin, Bullinger, Beza, Bucer, Mercer, Camerarius, and a host of other Reformation Expositors, are for all practical purposes dead. Semler charged him with copying Pellicanus, but Tholuck finds the charge untenable. He was more indebted to Bucer than to others,<sup>1</sup> but he was as original as he was powerful; and the fact that an English translation of his voluminous commentaries has been so recently published shews the living estimation in which he still is held. The *extent* of his services as a commentator is one of the elements of our gratitude to him. Luther only left a complete commentary on one Epistle of St. Paul, but Calvin wrote on the whole New Testament, with the single exception of the Apocalypse. He also wrote on the whole of the Old Testament, except on a few of the historic and hagiographic books. He tells us that his Harmony of the Gospels cost him severe labour. Like all writers, he is unequal. He is not always at his best, as he is in the commentaries on the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's letters. Some of his notes and Lectures, especially those on the Minor Prophets, were written without elaborate study; but the fact remains that he was beyond all question the greatest exegete of the Reformation Age, which produced greater exegetes than all the long preceding centuries.

We find in Calvin the same general characteristics which mark his immediate predecessors, but the vigour of his intellect, his logic, his fearlessness, his insight, enabled him to follow the same principles with more consistency. He

<sup>1</sup> In his Dedication to the Gospel Harmony, he says, "Bucerum præsertim, sanctæ memoriæ virum, et eximium Ecclesiæ doctorem sum imitatus." He says that he availed himself of Bucer's industry, as Bucer had availed himself of the labour of the ancients. In his Preface to the Psalms he also praises Musculus.



dwelt, as they did, on the necessity for finding one certain and simple sense. Like them, he set aside the inherent and superior authority of the Fathers.<sup>1</sup> Like them he totally rejected the fourfold sense, and abandoned the use of Allegory. But in carrying out these views, he shewed that he held them with a firmer grasp, as indeed was natural in the case of one who belonged to a later generation of Reformers. Thus, loudly as Luther and Melancthon declaim against the use of Allegory, which Melancthon<sup>2</sup> calls one of the ways of producing a *prodigiosa metamorphosis* in the meaning of Scripture, they both indulge in it far too freely. Calvin says that "since for many centuries no one was considered to shew any acumen who was not willing subtly to transfigure the word of God, that is nothing but a device of the devil (*commentum Satanæ*),<sup>3</sup> to annihilate the dignity of Scripture"; and he shakes off the influence of these long centuries far more completely than had been ever done before. Even where he is most hard pressed, he will scarcely admit the use of the word "allegory." Thus in his comment on Joel iii. 7, 8, he says that it would be "puerile" to understand the passage literally, and yet he says that it would be "far fetched (*coactum*) to take it allegorically," and that he "gladly abstains from allegories because there is nothing in them firm and solid."<sup>4</sup> Yet we must not be surprised that even Calvin is so far fettered as to yield to the subjective rationalism of explaining away the plain words of the author by introducing the conception

<sup>1</sup> Calvin is however less sweeping and more conservative than Luther in his attitude towards exegetic tradition. In his Preface to the Romans he says that we should always be careful not to be influenced by the spirit of controversy or the desire for novelty, and should only abandon an accepted view, "*necessitate coacti nec aliud quaerentes quam prodesse*." In an admirable passage in the Preface to the Institutes, he says that "it is false to say that we despise the Fathers" who (as he shews) agreed in many points with Reformation principles.

<sup>2</sup> Melancthon, *Element. Rhetorices*, vol. i. p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> *Comm. in Gal.* iv. 22.

<sup>4</sup> "Affinis sacrilegio audacia est Scripturas temere huc illuc versare et quasi in re lusoria lascivire."—*Praef. in Rom.*

of "the Church," in the place of the Jews, and by totally impossible glosses, instead of contenting himself with a rigid adherence to his own admirable rule, that it is the first business of an interpreter to let his author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think that he *ought* to say.<sup>1</sup>

Much of Calvin's excellence is due to the Divine training which he, in common with other great Reformers, had the blessing to enjoy. Shelley has said,—

"Most wretched men  
Are cradled into poetry by wrong:  
They learn in suffering what they teach in song."<sup>2</sup>

The same thing is eminently true of great religious teachers. Almost all of them have been taught essential truths by bitter experience.

It is common to attribute the Reformation to the Revival of Letters. It had its root—so many have said—in Humanism, and the study of "the Humanities." This is no doubt true; but the *litterae humaniores* would have led Europe, as they led men like Bembo, and Bibbiena, and Leo X., to an elegant paganism if they had not been combined with deep religious emotions. If Luther found in Justification by Faith a key to the teaching of St. Paul; if the invitation to the weary and heavy laden was to Zwingli the essence of the Gospel; if Christianity revealed itself to Calvin under the aspect of the opposition of the world to God,—the reason was that the Reformers of Wittenberg, Zurich, and Geneva had been placed in the forefront of the great battle of truth, and amid fears and fightings had found in Holy Scripture alone the teaching which enabled them to bear their troubles and overcome their doubts. The education of life had given them that insight into the human heart (*Menschenkenntniss*), which Schleiermacher

<sup>1</sup> See *Praef. in Rom.*

<sup>2</sup> *Julian and Maddalo.*

declared to be indispensable to the true interpreter. Luther had recognized that it was the trials of life which had opened to him the understanding of St. Paul. Calvin makes the same remark in the famous Preface to the Psalms, which tells us almost all we know of his inner life. That commentary on the Psalms is a masterpiece of psychological analysis, and like his set of Discourses on the Book of Job, which was so dear to Admiral Coligny, it was highly valued because in both Calvin had drawn many of his lessons from that which he had himself seen of the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, of the human heart. "If," he said, "the perusal of these my commentaries brings as great advancement to the Church of God as I have found in them myself, I shall have no occasion to repent of having undertaken this labour. *I am wont to call this book an anatomy of all the parts of the soul.* The Holy Ghost has here vividly described the sorrows, sadnesses, fears, doubts, hopes, anxieties, and perplexities, and even the confused emotions by which the minds of men are wont to be agitated. The experience which I have gained from the combats in which the Lord has exercised me, albeit it has not been very great, has greatly helped me therein." Comparing his own struggles to those of David, he says, that personal experience has helped him not only to apply to present use whatever doctrine he had learnt, but also to find an easier path to understand the meaning of the writer. God, he says, "had so led and whirled him about as to bring him into light and action, by leaving him no repose in any place whatever."

The prevalence then of deep religious feeling is one element which gives a value throughout to the Commentaries of Calvin. Tholuck, who has written an admirable study on them,<sup>1</sup> says that to read the Old Testament under his

<sup>1</sup> *Die Verdienste Calvin's als Ausleger der Heiligen Schrift.* (Vermischte Schriften. ii.)

guidance would be to deepen our sense of its practical religious value. On Isaiah xxxvi. 15 he dwells on the ease with which people are perverted by their immediate interests, and our temptation to think too much of what is at hand. On Micah iv. 6 he reminds us that a Church which is darkened is not necessarily dead, and makes the fine remark that "no Church can live without many resurrections." On Isaiah xiii. he speaks of the unreality through which men fail really to believe in the Providence which they profess to acknowledge. In days so prolific as our own of homiletic material—I had almost said sermon-pemmican—it may be useful to point to Calvin as a source of clear and manly thought. There is a specially beautiful passage in his Preface to the Commentaries on the Corinthians which he addressed to Galeazzo Caraccioli, who, though he was a nephew to Pope Paul IV., had forsaken all and joined the Protestant cause. Calvin's exhortations to self-denial for Christ's sake derived additional force from his own contented poverty. Calvin never adopts the weak plan of "improving the text" by commonplace homiletics, but his knowledge of life gives vividness to the scenes and characters, and his religious remarks are not dragged in, but spring naturally from the text which he has to explain.

We may speak of his special characteristics under two heads—merits of form, and merits in treatment.

I. Under the merits of form in Calvin's exegetical works we may mention—

*a. His neatness and precision of language.* His Latin is admirable; like Milton's, it is the Latin of a man, not of an echo. It is human, not Ciceronian. He scorned from the depth of his heart the euphuistic Paganism of Renaissance Latinists who, in their classic affectation, could only talk of the Holy Spirit as "the breath of the Celestial Zephyr"; of the Church as a Republic; of an Angel as a genius; of

conversion as an *emendatio morum*. Seeing the danger of false connotations, and despising a purist conventionality, he used *sanctimonia*, not *honestas*, and kept *poenitentiam agite*, instead of Beza's *resipiscite*. He shews his good sense by freely using convenient barbarisms, like *e converso*, *secundum litteram*, *circumstantiae*, etc. He tells us that he purposely retained the barbarous *Salvator* with the Fathers, rather than the more classic, but less expressive *Servator*, which Cicero had said did not fully express the Greek *Σωτήρ*. If any commentator had said to him, "Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone," Calvin would, with the Echo in Erasmus, have answered "Ove. He writes Latin with the dignity and originality and ease of a native language.<sup>1</sup>

β. *His terseness.* Calvin abhorred padding. He found the commentaries of Melancthon and Bucer too long and too digressive.<sup>2</sup> He would, I think, have looked with some contempt on the mass of modern commentaries, which consist in a *congeries* of vacillating *variorum* annotations, in which we are bewildered with the aimless multiplicity of views, like the "upwards of 300" on Galatians iii. 20. Pages, and almost volumes, have been written upon 1 Corinthians xi. 10: "a woman must have power on her head." Does not Calvin, whether his exposition be correct or not, say all that is essential in three lines, when he remarks that "power" is a metonymy for "a symbol of her husband's power over her." *Est autem velum, sive peplum sit, sive carbasus, sive aliud quodvis tegumentum*. No reading could be more absolutely unprofitable, or more dreadfully tedious, than this wading through scores of opinions,

<sup>1</sup> Pasquier, Raemond, Casaubon, De Thou, and even Bossuet bear testimony to the force and dignity of Calvin's style in French also.

<sup>2</sup> "Cupiebamus unum aliquem qui et *facilitati studeret* et simul operam daret ne *prolixis commentariis* studiosos ultra modum detineret. . . . Dimoveri non possum ab amore compendii." *Praef. in Rom.* Sayons excellently says of his commentaries, "Exposition brève, facile, lumineuse, sagacité rare, et entière bonne foi."

of which some are absurd, the majority impossible, and all but one must be wrong. There is nothing of this kind in Calvin. He rarely quotes. In the dedication of his Commentary on the Romans to his friend Grynaeus, he says that in conversation they had often agreed *praecipuam interpretis virtutem in perspicua brevitate esse positam*; and that they both desired some commentators who would not (as Melancthon too often does) expatiate on dogmatic propositions, or digress into alien polemics.<sup>1</sup> As to this last point however, Calvin would have been compelled to say *Monitis sum minor ipse meis*.<sup>2</sup>

γ. *His contempt for exegetic frivolities and insincerities.* His thorough comprehension of the truth that the language of the Old Testament is full of Anthropomorphism and Anthropopathy—i.e. the attribution to God of human traits and passions—is often the source of valuable remarks.<sup>3</sup> The Rabbis have a rule that whenever a prophet's father is mentioned in the Bible, this father was also a prophet. Calvin sweeps this tradition aside with the remark, "We see how impudent they were in such fictitious comments; when they have no reason to offer, *they invent a fable and obtrude it as an oracle*."<sup>4</sup> But he is just as rude to Christian figments. The Vulgate rendering of Joel i. 1 begins "*Verbum Dei quod factum est ad Joel*," and it was of course irresistible to St. Jerome and other patristic and mediæval commentators to drag the incidental idiom into an intimation of the Incarnation, as though it in some way implied the same as that "*the Word was made flesh*"! The honesty and strong good sense of Calvin rightly regarded such com-

<sup>1</sup> The Preface to the Romans, and a letter to Viret (May 19th, 1540), give us most clearly his conception of the duties of an exegete.

<sup>2</sup> For some of his remarks on Allegory, see notes on Gen. ii. 8, vi. 14.

<sup>3</sup> See notes on Gen. i. 31, ii. 19, iii. 8, vi. 5, 6, 8, vii. 16, viii. 21, etc. The remark on iii. 21 is worth quoting. "*Non sic accipi haec verba convenit quasi Deus fuerit pellifex. Credibile non est pelles illis fortuito esse oblatas sed necessitate coactos mactasse aliqua (animalia) quorum se corio tegerent.*"

<sup>4</sup> On Joel i. 1.

ments as a discreditable play on words, and he throws the comment aside with the contemptuous word *Nugae!* Writing on John i. 3, he rejects Augustine's allusion to the Platonic doctrine of ideas. In Hebrews xi. 31, he is too honest not to see that *πόρνη* means *meretrix*, and that it is a mere subterfuge to make it mean *caupona*. Speaking of the Ceremonial Law, and the attempts to give it a mystic significance, he says, "It is better to confess ignorance than to play with frivolous guesses."

δ. *His learning.* This is all the more remarkable because it is solid, yet is never obtruded. The notes, both on Hebrew<sup>1</sup> and Greek philology,<sup>2</sup> are almost always valuable and sound. He cares less than Erasmus and Beza about various readings, nor does he often refer to the Greek fathers. His object was not the acervation of glosses, but the production of a compendium for persons of every age, condition, and degree of culture. He recognized, with the great Cappadocian Father, the reality of Ethnic Inspiration.<sup>3</sup> On 1 Corinthians viii. 1 he rebukes the fanatics who rave (*furiose clamitant*) against all knowledge. The first work he ever wrote was a comment on Seneca *De Clementia*; and though he does not enrich his pages with classical parallels to anything like the same extent as Grotius or Wetstein, he yet quotes, in different places, from Plato,<sup>4</sup> Plutarch,<sup>5</sup> Polybius,<sup>6</sup> Cicero, Ovid, Horace, Quintilian, and Aulus Gellius. His object is always to bring his knowledge to bear, but only for purposes of real elucidation, and never for display. That he would have been as able as the best to parade his classical learning is shewn by his notes to the treatise of Seneca.

<sup>1</sup> See notes on Gen. i. 2, v. 29; Ps. iv. 4; Isa. iii. 1; Rom. ix. 28; Heb. vii. 17, ix. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 6, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Notes on Rom. i. 28, ii. 7, viii. 3; 1 Tim. i. 4; Heb. xi. 1; Acts xxiv. 20, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Note on Tit. i. 12.

<sup>4</sup> On 1 Cor. x. 20, xiv. 7; Eph. iv. 17; Col. ii. 18; 1 Tim. ii. 1, v. 19; Tit. i. 7.

<sup>5</sup> On 1 Tim. v. 13; 1 Cor. ii. 29.

<sup>6</sup> On 2 Cor. x. 4.

Turning to deeper characteristics of Calvin's exposition, we may notice—

i. *His attention to the context.* He always studies the whole scope of the passage with which he is dealing. In explaining St. Paul especially, he is thus enabled to make the meaning and reasoning of the Apostle wonderfully clear. Had Calvin been more studied, the field of Christian controversy would not be strewn as it now is with scores, perhaps hundreds, of texts and expressions which are habitually misapplied. Calvin's constant aim is to explain the whole with reference to all its constituent parts, and each part by its relation to the whole.

ii. *His method.* Calvin sets himself with order and thoroughness to his work as an expositor. He does not rush at a text with the object of saying the first thing which comes into his head, or of extracting from it some favourite prepossession; but he first considers any difficulties caused by the construction (such as unfinished sentences, or the transposition of words); then he explains such rhetorical figures as Klimax, Antithesis, Paronomasia; then he examines—often in a very useful manner—the verbal usages of the particular author;<sup>1</sup> then, lastly, he gives the sense of the passage, specially with reference to the whole context. The reader is thus led on step by step, and whether he agrees with the final conclusion or not, feels at heart that he has been led up to it in a fair and methodical manner.<sup>2</sup>

iii. *His manly independence.* Calvin is never satisfied with a current interpretation merely because it is current. In the midst of all the casuistry and fantastic insincerity which degrade many pages of exegesis, alike ancient and modern, Calvin's good sense comes refreshingly, as a breath of the spring air when we step out of a hothouse. When a

<sup>1</sup> As *κείμενος* in John xvi. 20; *μή γένοιτο*, Rom. vi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Tholuck, l.c.



conclusion seems plain to him, he expresses it without fear and without subterfuge. Speaking of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he says, "I cannot be induced to acknowledge Paul as the author." Speaking of the Epistle of Jude, he says that its canonicity was disputed, but that he is glad to number it among the rest because it is useful, and many high authorities accepted it. Speaking of the Second Epistle of Peter, he only says that "since the majesty of Christ's spirit displays itself throughout it, he feels a scruple about entirely rejecting it (*eam prorsus repudiare mihi religio est*), although he cannot acknowledge in it the genuine phraseology of Peter." He declares John viii. 1 and 1 John v. 7 to be not genuine; and calls 1 John ii. 14 a gloss. He speaks as boldly as Luther; but does not decide on canonicity by tests so purely subjective as his great forerunner.

iv. *His honesty.* Calvin abhors the notion of "lying for God." He finds a number of "proof-texts" traditionally used against Arians, Socinians, etc., or employed to support the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. It makes no difference to him that these texts had been accepted as arguments by a multitude of his predecessors. His legal education, if nothing else, had led him to see how unadvisable it is to support a good cause by bad reasoning. But far more than this, his faith in a God of truth makes him feel that to offer a hollow argument to the cause of God is as vile a desecration as to burn swine's flesh upon the altar. Too clear-headed to be content with what is forced and uncertain, he was too sincere to accept what was fantastic. He held it immoral to defend any special *dictum probans*, because it was polemically useful. He was so far from holding the theory of verbal dictation, that he admitted the possibility of oversights or trivial errors in the sacred writers.<sup>1</sup> Even in such a verse as John i. 1, he will not

<sup>1</sup> See his notes on Matt. xxvii. 9; Acts vii. 16.

admit that the word "was" is a sufficient proof of the Divinity of the Word. "We must," he says, "argue more firmly in matters of such great moment." In the Old Testament he again and again rejects orthodox arguments for truths which no man held more firmly than himself. In Genesis iii. 15 he says that "seed" is a collective word meaning "posterity," and only interpreted of Christ by subsequent experience. On verse 22 he will not allow the word "us" to be used in any argument for the Trinity, nor yet will he admit the arguments for the Trinity drawn from Genesis xviii. 2, or Isaiah vi. 3. In Exodus iii. 2 he rejects Luther's allegorising, which saw Christ in the burning bush. He prefers, he says, to use stronger arguments. He will not argue from Isaiah iv. 2 for the Divinity of Christ, for to do so is to make ourselves laughable to the Jews. In Isaiah xlviii. 16 he says that it is not Christ but the Prophet who is speaking, and that we ought to be on our guard against violent and forced arguments. On Psalm xxxiii. 6; Isaiah xi. 4, he makes "the breath of his mouth" mean *sermo*, and says that he should not dare to press a Sabellian with such an expression. These are but specimens of many passages in which Calvin shews his noble honesty and masculine sense. They drew on him such attacks as the *Calvinus Judaisans* of Hunnius<sup>1</sup>; and the remarks of Montacute,<sup>2</sup> that he wrested out of their hands the weapons of Christian athletes; and of Walch,<sup>3</sup> that "Calvin expounded oracles about the Trinity and the Messiah in accordance with Jewish and Socinian views."

Nor was Calvin less independent in his handling of the

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1593. For the full long title of this book, which complains that Calvin "illustriora Scripturæ loca de Trinitate, etc., *detestandum in modum corrumpere non abhorruit*." It was answered by Pareus in his *Orthodoxus Calvinus*. Hunnius said that Calvin ought to have been burnt as he burnt Servetus; and Pareus, with equal amenity, assigns the work of Hunnius to the authorship of the devil. See Budæus, *Isagoge*, pp. 1062-1495.

<sup>2</sup> *Orig. Eccl.*, i. 310.

<sup>3</sup> *Bibl. Theol.*, iv. 413.

New Testament. The vast majority of Reformation critics referred "he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven" (ὁ μικρότερος) in Matthew xi. 11, to Christ<sup>1</sup>; Calvin anticipated most recent critics in applying it to all Christians. In Matthew xvi. 18, he will not accept Luther's view that Christ pointed to himself as the Rock (δεικτικῶς)<sup>2</sup> but that he referred to Peter, not in his own person, but as the representative of all believers. In John x. 30 he sees not the *Homousion*, but the oneness of will between Christ and the Father. Other examples may be found in his notes on John i. 52, v. 31, 32; 2 Cor. xii. 7; and 1 Pet. iii. 19.

v. Undoubtedly one of the most characteristic features in the Exegesis of Calvin is the bold attitude which he adopted on the subject of those Messianic prophecies which are quoted in the New Testament. This may best be illustrated by a few examples, which it will be fair to quote in his own exact words.

On Micah v. 2 (Bethlehem Ephratah) as quoted in Matthew ii. 6, he says:—

"Quid opus est torquere prophetæ verba quum Evangelistæ non fuerit propositum referre quod apud Prophetam loquitur, sed notare locum duntaxat."

On Matthew ii. 15 ("out of Egypt I have called my son") he writes:—"Locum non debere ad Christum restringi. Neque tamen a Matthæo torquetur, sed scite aptatur ad præsentem causam."

On Matthew viii. 17:—"Quod apud Jesaiam de animæ vitiis dici certum est, Matthæus ad corporales morbos transfert."

On John xix. 37 ("They shall look on him whom they pierced"):—"Locum hunc qui secundum litteram de Christo exponere conantur, nimis violenter torquent. Nec vero in

<sup>1</sup> Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Pellicanus.

<sup>2</sup> So Luther, Calovius, Lange, &c. Tholuck quotes the keen remark of Michaelis, that "the pointing finger was not that of Christ, but of the polemical commentator."

hunc finem ab Evangelista citatur; sed potius ut ostendat Christum esse Deum illum qui olim conquestus fuit per Zachariam sibi pectus a Judæis transfodi."

On Hebrews iv. 4: "Alludit magis ad verba Davidis quam interpretatur. . . . Ejusmodi ἐπεξεργασία est apud Paulum ad Rom. x. 6."

Hebrews xi. 21 ("Leaning upon the top of his staff"):—"Quod vulgo receptum erat Apostolus non dubitat suo instituto accommodare. . . . Scimus hac in parte Apostolos non adeo fuisse scrupulosos."

Other examples of the same views may be found in his notes on Matthew i. 23, ii. 15; John ii. 17, etc. Such passages not only illustrate his robust originality, but shew that while he retained all the noble and intense reality of Messianic prophecy, he was strong enough and honest enough to throw off the trammels of such previous methods of exegesis as are entirely untenable, and that he had the insight to take up a position nearly three centuries in advance of his own age. He recognized the principle which is now universally admitted, that the words of Psalmists and Prophets, while they not only admit of but demand "germinant and springing developments," were yet primarily applicable to the events and circumstances of their own days.

Such then are some of the characteristics of Calvin as an expositor. Of course neither he nor any other writer was free from some counterbalancing defects, which are often due as much to the age as to the man. Thus Calvin, like all the Reformers, laid down in the strongest manner the supreme and final authority of Scripture, and yet never enters into any decisive argument on which his position can be based. He speaks indeed of the inherent power and beauty of Scripture, and of the inward testimony of the Holy Ghost;<sup>1</sup> but neither he nor any writer of his

age clearly explained whether they attributed to all and every part of Scripture the supreme dignity and absolute authority which they assign to it as a whole ; nor did they lay down any philosophic limits of the relation between the Old and the New Testament ; nor did they ever explain how their own free handling of certain verses and passages accorded with their general theory. Luther indeed shews by his repeated language that he did not hold the two phrases "Scripture" and "the Word of God" to be identical and coextensive, but he throws no other light on the distinction between the two beyond such light as we may derive from the remark that we must consider whether in any particular passage God's word be such *to us* or not. In this respect the views of Calvin seem to have been more rigid. They were distinctly retrogressive, and they led him into strange quagmires. They are also very difficult to reconcile with his almost contemptuous rejection of the whole sacrificial system, and his statement that the notion of God making his throne on the Mercy-seat was "a crass figment," from which even a David and a Hezekiah were not free. Thus when René, Duchess of Ferrara, daughter of Louis XII., remarked in a letter that David's example in hating his enemies is not applicable to us, he curtly and sternly answered that "such a gloss would upset all Scripture"; that even in his hatred David is an example to us and a type of Christ ; and should we presume to set ourselves up as superior to Him in sweetness and humanity ? It is strange that he should never have thought of the verse in the sermon on the Mount, "It was said to them of old time, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy ; but I say unto you, Love your enemies." No doubt Calvin would have writhed out of the plain meaning by some of those subterfuges and distinctions which again and again have let in by the postern gate of a text the evil notions which are kept out by the whole defences of Christianity.

In the acerbities of Puritanism, in the severity of Rome, in the ruthlessness of the Pilgrim Fathers towards Quakers, in the perennial bitterness of sects, in the constant recrudescences of intolerance and persecution, and in the deadly injuries thus inflicted on the cause of religion, we see the consequence of these confused notions which drew no distinction between the relative authority of different parts of Scripture. The worst blot on Calvin's name, the burning of Servetus, probably had its root in the inability to distinguish between the Elijah spirit and the Christ spirit.<sup>1</sup> A much humbler person than Calvin, even the Rev. Mr. Poundtext, showed much deeper insight than the illustrious theologian. "By what law," says Henry Morton to Balfour of Burley, "would you justify the atrocity you would commit?" "If thou art ignorant of it," replied Burley, "thy companion is well aware of the law which gave the men of Jericho to the sword of Joshua the son of Nun." "Yes; but we," answered the divine, "live under a better dispensation, which instructeth us to return good for evil, and to pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us."<sup>2</sup>

It must be further admitted that Calvin not unfrequently drags in, without any warrant, his distinctive dogma.<sup>3</sup> He finds predestination, reprobation, election, and the secret counsel of God in passages which are in no way germane to the inculcation of such views. In John i. 12 ("To them gave he the right (*ἐξουσίαν*) to become children of God") he

<sup>1</sup> If the execution of Servetus was approved by Melancthon, even Beza (*Vita Calvini*, A.D. 1550) tells us that it was widely and severely condemned. See too Waller, *Diary*, 1553. Martinus Bellius, in his *Farrago* (of which some attributed the authorship to Castellio and Laelius Socinus), shewed that not only the 16th century Reformers, but even the Fathers, held that heretics ought not to be capitally punished.

<sup>2</sup> *Old Mortality*.

<sup>3</sup> The reader will find Calvinism dragged into notes on Genesis xv. 6 (*gratuita fidei electio*), iv. 25, xxv. 23; Numbers iv. 21; and indeed *passim*. In the New Testament these views will be specially found in notes on Matthew vii. 13; John vi. 44; Romans i. 24, ix. 11; Ephesians i. 4; 2 Timothy ii. 4, etc.

tells us that instead of "power" or "right," he (like Beza) should have preferred the rendering "dignity," because out of the word ἐξουσίαν Papias elicits "free will," like fire out of water. On Luke xi. 4 ("Lead us not into temptation") he most unwarrantably remarks that God used Satan as his minister to thrust men into perdition, "not as though God is the author of evil, since, by sending men into a reprobate sense, he exercises not a confused tyranny, but carries out his just, though secret, judgment." Could any comment be more alien from the spirit of the Lord's prayer? It is not without reason that Richard Simon complains of his "*expressions dures*" and "*declamations injurieuses*." When in a commentary on St. John we come very early on such a harshness as "*Servetus superbissimus ex gente Hispanicâ nebulo*," it gives us a shock of displeasure as being completely out of place. Schröckh justly blames the injurious expressions—too common among theologians even in these days—with which Calvin assails all who do not accept his views. He is often needlessly dialectical, so that we seem to be dealing rather with the jurist who was the pupil of Alciati than with the Expositor. He is sometimes guilty of forced and untenable renderings and explanations, as when he explains "that wicked person" (τὸν πονηρὸν) in 1 Corinthians v. 13, of the devil; and takes the "of the glory" (τῆς δόξης) in James ii. 1, in the sense of "*ex opinione*." It is painful to watch his efforts to explain away "it repenteth him of the evil," in Joel ii. 13. It conflicts with his favourite idol of "irreversible decrees," and he is driven to the view which Archbishop Tillotson adopted, that God's threats are conditional, and that the condition may be understood even when it is not expressed. In this and other passages we feel that the Dogmatist gets the better of the Exegete, because the Exegete, like his contemporaries, had failed to grasp the progressiveness of Revelation, and the external circumstances of age and re-

lative knowledge by which it is conditioned. Still, after every one of his faults and limitations as an Expositor has been catalogued, it remains undeniable that Calvin is the greatest Expositor of the Reformation era, and that his commentaries have a higher and more permanent value than those of any other writer from the days of Nicolas of Lyra down to modern times.

F. W. FARRAR.

*THE MORAL ASPECTS OF THE MOSAIC NARRATIVE OF THE CREATION.*

GENESIS I.

IN an article entitled "And God created Great Whales," which I contributed to this Magazine for 1882 (see Vol. iv. *Second Series*, pp. 191 ff.) there was one section which attracted an unusual amount of attention. It was that in which I gave my recollection of a discourse which I heard from the lips of Rev. T. T. Lynch some five and twenty years ago. Many of his friends—and no man ever had more devoted friends—wrote to thank me for the pleasure I had given them, to remind me that there was a second part to that Discourse, better even than the first, of which I had given no account; and to beg me, if I could, to complete my report of it. One or two of them even sent me "notes," which they had taken at the time, and placed them at my service. These, however, I found to be too fragmentary and imperfect to be of real use. But twenty-five years ago I had a singularly retentive memory; and, if I sat down to the work within a few hours, could generally so report any speech or discourse in which I had been deeply interested as to retain its main substance, and even something of its form, though I never could take "notes" while listening to the speaker without forgetting all that I had heard except



so much as I had written down. That too retentive memory played me some pranks indeed, and plunged me into some difficulties; but nevertheless it had its compensations. And among those compensations I reckon it not the least that it enabled me to preserve a tolerably clear impression of some of Mr. Lynch's sermons—sermons the like of which I never expect to hear again.

I have looked up my report of the second part of the Discourse to which my correspondents have referred, and find that it fully sustains the admiring recollections of it which after so many years they still cherish. That report must necessarily be imperfect, and especially imperfect in this, that it must do injustice to that exquisite and poetic beauty of expression in which Mr. Lynch excelled all the great speakers and preachers I have heard; but it preserves, I think, many of his suggestive and instructive thoughts. Hence I propose to lay it before the readers of *The Expositor*, in the hope that they may reap some advantage and pleasure from its perusal.

No further preface will be required, if the reader will only be good enough to read the paragraphs numbered 8 and 9 in the Article to which I have already referred. If they cannot do that, it may be enough to say that, in the first part of his discourse, Mr. Lynch had dwelt on the *scientific* aspects of the narrative contained in the first chapter of Genesis, and had argued that this narrative gives us the best conception of the origin of the universe which the best Hebrew minds were able to frame; that these conceptions, fairly interpreted, are in singular and admirable accord with the generalizations of modern science, and promise, as science advances, to win a more entire acceptance; and that the very deficiencies of the story, from a scientific point of view, are among its chief merits and excellences, since they enable it to produce a larger and even a truer impression on the popular mind.

He then, so far as my poor report enables me to follow him, proceeded thus.

But, now, let us turn to the *moral* aspects of this Chapter ; and in dealing with these I shall hold to the same method—admitting defect, but trying to shew that, for the purpose in hand, these very defects are merits of the most singular excellence.

Men have so occupied themselves with the supposed collisions of Science and Scripture, our attention has been so often directed to the conflict between Geology and Genesis, that probably you have never been troubled by any suspicion of moral defect in the Mosaic narrative. But the very moment it is suggested to you, you will see how great the defect is, how much may be made of it by hostile criticism ; how imperative it is, therefore, that we should be able, if we honestly can, to prove this defect an excellence.

When God looked down on his finished work, He pronounced it “very good.” Can *we* honestly adopt that verdict? *He*, the God of Moses, might well say, “All is very good” ; for the narrative gives no hint of that which is evil, or seems to be evil, in the natural world, of that which is inimical to health, life, peace. There is no suggestion in this Chapter of storm, pestilence, earthquake, disorder, disease, and the endless havoc that springs from the fierce appetites of fish and bird and beast and creeping thing. But all these “evils,” as we call them, were in the world before man was set to rule and subdue the world, and long before Moses wrote the story of its creation. Was it fair, then, to suppress all mention of these “evils,” to shew us only what was good in the world, to pass by death, disorder, disease, as though these were of no account? Is not the Biblical story of creation as defective from a moral, as from a scientific, point of view? If we were to rewrite that story, should we not, simply by introducing omitted

facts into it, give it a wholly different moral tone. As thus:—

“God divided the light from the darkness ; and God said, Let there be a pestilence that walketh in darkness, and heats that scorch and smite at noon. God divided the air from the waters ; and God said, Let the waters roar and be troubled, and let the winds rave and destroy. God divided the earth from the seas ; and God said, Let the earth be scattered over with deserts of salt and sand, and let the grass and herbs and trees run into dank unwholesome jungles. God made the sun to rule the day, moon and stars to rule the night ; and God said, Let them be often darkened and not for many days appear, and let them possess a fascination for men so fatal that they shall worship all the host of heaven. God created the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air ; and God said, Let the fish devour one another, and let birds of prey hover in the air, and let their hearts be set on carrion. And, last of all, God made the beasts of the earth, and man, their lord ; and God said, Let the beasts thirst for blood, and let all creatures strive against man, and let the conflict with them be harder for him because man preys on his fellow-man.”

Now in this new dismal story of the creation, you observe, we simply introduce *facts*—facts omitted from the Mosaic story. In *that* there is not a word of the “evils” of nature, not a hint even, unless it be in the mention of that primeval darkness which may have contained the germs of all things ill, just as the light contains the germs of all things good. The story is morally defective, therefore, as well as scientifically defective. It does not cover, or does not seem to cover, all the facts of the case ; it omits many of the facts with which we are all painfully familiar, and apart from which our conception of the world is incomplete.

Is there, then, no reason for this defect, no reason that

converts it into an excellency? Surely there is. For, consider: with all you know of what we call the evils of the natural world, do you not feel, do you not often say, "It is very good. I ask no fairer home than this. If only men were good, earth were heaven!" *This* is your feeling—is it not? that if you yourselves were good and your fellow-men were good, the earth would be "very good," a very good and fitting home for you and them. But God is good. Why, then, should not He find the earth a very good earth? Your feeling that the earth would be good if only man were good, is shared by the vast majority of men. And why should not this popular feeling find expression in an account of the creation designed for the popular mind? In writing this first Chapter of Genesis, Moses was no more bent on producing a complete moral essay than on penning a complete scientific treatise. What he aimed at was to give such an account of the creation as would find its way to the popular heart, as would reflect and, while reflecting, correct and enlarge its impressions. Despite our knowledge of evil, we say, "The world is a good world, a very good world, to those who are good enough to live in it." Why, then, should we blame Moses for thinking of the world as we think, and speaking of it as we speak? Is not what we say *true*: why, then, should it be *untrue* on his lips?

On his lips, if not truer than on ours, it is at least more suggestive of faith and hope; for he was in the counsel of the Almighty: and we may be very sure that if God pronounced the world "very good," it was, and is, very good, and will more fully prove itself good to us as we grow wiser. Our own impression is, as we have seen, that it is a good world; but, at times, when storm, pestilence, disease, death, come very near us, we might distrust our own impression were it not for the Divine assurance and confirmation of it. *Then* we are glad to strengthen our private impression by God's public word, and are able to *believe* that the world is

good, even though we cannot see it, because God has said that it is good.

And if the Divine story and verdict strengthen faith, they also suggest hope. When He pronounced the world very good, God knew or foreknew that man would fall away from Him : and how could a world in which men were to sin be a very good world unless it contained whatever was good for them *in the time of their sin and trial*, as well as that which was good for them before they fell and after their redemption was complete ? It would not have been a good world to God unless it contained whatever was really good for man under all changes and conditions, however evil this or that in it might seem. And, perhaps, one reason why God dwells on what was good in his creative work, and keeps out of view what we think evil, was this : that He might inspire us with the hope that as things were good in the beginning, so all things will round to a final goal of good ; and that, by assuming all things to be good, He might teach us to look for good in what we call evil.

We admit, then, the moral defect of the Narrative, that it does not cover all the facts of Nature, that it gives no account of "the evil" that is in the world. But we contend that this defect is an excellence, if God's design were to detain our hearts and minds on the thought that, in his view, all things are good and tend to good ; that what we think evil is but the shadow of time and will pass with time, but that what we see to be good is to be for ever.

Again : there may be in this Narrative, in its very defect, a hint that "the things of darkness" are as truly, though not so obviously, ministers of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness as "the things of light." Much that we call evil in Nature is certainly good, or contributes to the general good. It has been justly said that if every man were able, and were permitted, to destroy whatever he did

not like, whatever he held to be evil to him, nothing would be left ; even those things which are recognized as of the most general use would be banished from the world by the dislike, by the distempered appetite or the foolish mistakes of this man or that. We may find a significant, though trivial, illustration of this fact in our newspapers. How often are we told of farmers, at home or abroad, who have shot down the birds of their district, because these small thieves of the air have injured, or have been supposed to injure, their crops,—only to discover by the immense multiplication of grubs and caterpillars, who do them far worse harm, that they have destroyed not their enemies but their friends. God's creatures have many ways of ministering to each other's good. Some render a direct service by nourishing life ; others render indirect service to the general welfare by keeping down forms of life which, unchecked, would multiply far too rapidly. Creatures prey on each other ; plants live upon and strangle each other ; fish live on fish, birds on birds, beasts on beasts, man on all : but thus the general balance of life is preserved, and the order and welfare of the world at large are maintained.

The world *is* a good world ; for good largely predominates in the world. True, there are forces in it which produce storms, earthquakes, blight, murrain, pestilence, broad sandy deserts, barren soils, tangled and unwholesome jungles ; but take the world as a whole, and there are far more fruitful than barren soils, far more nutritious herbs and fragrant flowers and fruitful trees than noxious weeds : storm and earthquake are local and infrequent, while the sun shines everywhere and “ the rain it raineth every day.” The world *is* a good world ; for though there is much in it that tells of evil, even the evil in it points to larger ultimate good. The storms bring us a purer air and fruitful showers ; earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are but the occasional outbreaks of that gracious interior fire which

keeps the surface of the earth warm and fertile all the year round; autumnal decay enriches the soil; the fierce instincts which lead creature to prey on creature, not only preserve that general balance of life which is most for the common health and fecundity and welfare; they are also used by the Divine Wisdom for the production of still higher and more profitable forms of life, the struggle for existence giving rise to the noblest and most enduring forms of existence. But if good predominates over evil, and if even that which is evil in its effects to some subserves the general good, why should not we, why should not Moses, why should not God Himself, pronounce the world of nature to be "very good?" Had Moses dwelt on the facts and aspects of the natural world which we call evil, would he have given us so true an impression of the world as it exists, and of the end for which it exists, as he has given us by passing by all *that*, to dwell on the fact that all things were made by God, and made to minister to the good of all? If not, that which we have spoken of as the moral defect of his narrative becomes an excellence of the highest order, and the omissions of his story only make his story more true and more complete.

We say, then, that the world is a good, a very good, world; but can we also say that it is the best possible world? To that question we must reply, Yes, *and*, No. We must reply "No," because we look for an ampler fairer world than this, a world free from those signs of struggle and imperfection which we now discover around us; or for such a change in ourselves, in the eyes with which we look out on the world, as will enable us rightly to interpret what now seem to us signs of defect and conflict, and to find in them the signs of perfection and victory. We look, in short, for such a change in the world, or in ourselves, as shall bring us a new heaven and a new earth. Till that change come, we must say: "No, we are not in the best

world possible." And yet, till that change come, it may be the best world possible for *us*. A physician sometimes says of a patient, "He is going on as well as possible." What! a man confined to his chamber, oppressed by weakness, his brain clouded with pain—is he going on as well as possible? Yes, as well as possible *for a sick man*, and in the best possible place. He may still suffer much, and have much more to suffer before he can leave his chamber for the activities of the great busy world; but he is passing rightly through the stages and crises of his disorder, and, with care and patience, we may cherish the best hopes for him. And, in like manner, we may say of the world: It is the best possible world for us while we are still smitten with the infections of evil, and that we are going on in it as well as is possible. It takes faith, indeed, in the wise goodness of the great Maker and Healer, and sometimes it *tasks* faith, to say of the world, of any race, or of any man in it: He, or it, is doing well, as well as possible, in the conditions. But with faith in Him who made all things good, and made all for good, we can say it. There may be many relapses, much that disappoints and hurts us; but, nevertheless, if we are taught of God, we may see that the powers of darkness are being subdued by the powers of light, that good is slowly but surely overcoming evil; and when we cannot *see* it, we still believe it, because we know that the defect is in our vision, not in God's ordering of the world, because we are sure that his gracious purpose cannot be made void by the sin of man. He made all things for good; He doeth all things well; and therefore all must go well and reach a final and complete end of good at the last.

If we did not believe that, how could we enter into God's rest? When God had finished all his work, we are told that He *rested* from his work, and blessed the day on which He rested. Now this Divine "rest" is the repose



of satisfaction in work done and in the benefits that will accrue from it. When we have completed a difficult task, when, as we survey it, we see that it answers to the scheme, the idea, we had in our mind; when we can pronounce it, "Very good work very well done," we enter into as pure a satisfaction, as true a rest, as it is given us to know, and bless the day which brought it. And we are made in the image, after the likeness, of God. There must, therefore, be in God that which corresponds to our satisfaction in work well and truly done. Moses assures us that there *is* that in Him. God has created the elements, dividing the light from the darkness, the air from the water, the earth from the sea; thus giving form to the formless universe. He has furnished the elements with their appropriate tenants—the light with sun, moon, and stars; the air with birds to sport in it, the sea with fish to swim in it, the earth with beasts to live in it: thus filling the empty universe. And, now, God surveys everything that He has made; and, behold, it is very good: all things have their form: there is a vast complex service of uses where before there was a shapeless void. And God is satisfied. He rests from his labours. He rejoices in his finished work, and in the benefits that will flow from it.

And how shall we enter into his rest, unless we can see or believe that the work is a good work, the world a good world? unless we can see or believe that all that is, or seems to be, evil in it, subserves the general good, and will conduct to a still larger and more universal good? This *is* our faith; this our hope. To us, this story of the Creation is not only a story; it is also a parable, and a parable that bids us both wait and hope. It says to us, Do not expect to say, "It is very good," until the end come; but do not cease to expect an end in which all things shall rest, and you shall rejoice over a good as wide

as the universe, as lasting as eternity. For the present there may be much to perplex, much to sadden, much to disappoint you; but wait on, and hope on: for that which is perfect *will* come, though it tarry, and you shall have peace at the last.

ALMONI PELONI.

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ST. PAUL ON THE HEATHEN.

ROMANS II. 12-16.

IN the 16th and 17th verses of the First Chapter of this Epistle, we have, though in no technical form, the theological thesis or theme of the most important of all the doctrinal discussions in which the Apostle Paul was ever engaged. The verses run thus:—"I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is God's power for salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and to the Greek; for God's righteousness is revealed in it *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν*, as it stands written, *He who is righteous by faith shall live.*"

In the remainder of the Chapter, the Apostle shews, in a free and easy manner, befitting epistolary composition, that Greeks or Gentiles stand in most urgent need of the Gospel, their actual ethical condition being extremely corrupt.

Then, in Chapter ii. he proceeds, in a manner of peculiarly effective dialectic, to impeach his countrymen, the Jews, of equal pravity and guilt. "Thou doest," says he, "the same things." And "dost thou think," he inquires, "that thou shalt escape the condemnation of God?" He proceeds to maintain that God is absolutely impartial, and will render to every man, whether Jew or Gentile, according to his deeds, and thus according to his real character. At the bar of the great Judge no one will be accepted because he is a Jew; and no one will be condemned because he is a

Gentile. On the contrary, they who, by patient continuance in good-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, shall, whether Gentiles or Jews, receive retributively "eternal life;" while they who are of a factious spirit in relation to God, and disobey the truth, but are obedient to unrighteousness, shall, whether Jews or Gentiles, be visited with "wrath and indignation;" for, says he, "there is no προσωποληψία on the part of God." Then follows the first of the verses we purpose to consider in this article:—"For as many as sinned *ἀνόμως* shall also perish *ἀνόμως*; and as many as sinned *ἐν νόμῳ*, shall be judged *διὰ νόμον*."

It may be noted, in the first place, that the Apostle says *sinned*, putting his verb in the aorist. He has stepped forward, in imagination, to the great judgment day, and is thence looking back upon life's concluded career. Hence the *ἥμαρτον*.

Then, in the second place, we must consider what is the *νόμος* referred to, when the Apostle speaks of those, on the one hand, who sinned *ἀνόμως*, and of those, on the other, who sinned *ἐν νόμῳ*. Manifestly it is not what is, in common theological parlance, called *the moral law*; for there is no such thing as sinning without the moral law. All sin is *ἀνομία*, and hence relative to the moral law. Take away from any man, or from the reach of any man, the grand law of morals, and you abstract from him the possibility of sinfulness it is true; but likewise, and by the same stroke of abstraction, the possibility of the ethical antithesis of sinfulness, that is, the possibility of ethical goodness or righteousness.

Then, again, the expression "the hearers of the law," occurring in the next verse, shews that it is not to *the moral law* that the Apostle is referring. It is to something more extensive in a literary point of view. He manifestly had in his eye the consecutive readings that were statedly con-

ducted in the synagogues with a view to the instruction and edification of the Jewish people at large. He refers, in other words, to the Bible in its entirety, such as the Hebrews had in their Sacred Scriptures. That Bible was their *vómos* in the generic and radical acceptation of the term. It was their Torah, because it was, to them, *the Divine Teaching*, which should, in virtue of the imperatives which pervaded it, and the wisdom which pervaded the imperatives, have resulted in the full-orbed spiritual and ethical education of the people. This Hebrew word תּוֹרָה (*torah*) came out of the alembic of the Septuagint Translators as *vómos*, because it is God's grand ethical Imperative, whether viewed on the side of its formal *statutes, precepts, and commandments*, or of its *prophecies*, or of its *testimonies and psalms*, or simply on the side of its *words* in the sum total of their connected or concatenated import.

The term *vómos* is used in this extensive and generic acceptation when it is said in the Old Testament that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," and when it is said in the New, "the people answered and said, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou then that the Son of man must be lifted up?" (See also Matt. v. 18, xxiii. 23; John x. 34, xv. 25; 1 Cor. xiv. 21.) No one supposes, or can suppose, that in these statements the reference is to *the moral law*. The Greek *vómos*, the Hebrew תּוֹרָה, the English *Law*, and the Latin *Lex*, are by no means absolute synonymes. The lights which they flash on the grand Reality referred to by them all, are varied. The Reality itself remains unique, and cannot be perfectly mirrored in any human vocable or definition. Koppe would translate the *vómos*, *Offenbarung*, that is, *Revelation*. Middleton, of *Greek Article Celebrity*, adopted from Macknight the same version. But such a term is too free for a translation, and not sufficiently comprehensive for a logical definition or rhetorical explanation;

for the Revelation referred to in the verse before us is a specific kind of revelation. *It is verbal.* And the Greek term felicitously implies that this verbal Revelation is an *Authoritative Rule of Life.*

What, then, does the Apostle mean when he says, "as many as sinned *ἀνόμως* shall also perish *ἀνόμως*?" Does he mean that all the heathen, who, on the one hand, have no Bible, and who, on the other, have lost their moral innocence, shall be destroyed? *We are not shut up exegetically to such a conception of his meaning.* For the word *sinned* may be used in its emphatic acceptance.

Such an emphatic sense of the term is familiar in our current theological phraseology, and likewise in the Scriptures. We speak discriminately of *saints and sinners*, though firmly believing that *saints are sinners*, in the unemphatic acceptance of the term. Our Saviour discriminated in the very same manner,—“If ye do good to them who do good to you, what thank have ye? for *sinners* also do even the same” (Luke vi. 33). “If ye lend to them from whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for *sinners* also lend to sinners to receive as much again” (Luke vi. 34). Evidently those were *sinners* in the intensive acceptance of the term. So when the disciples, on a certain occasion, asked our Lord, saying, “Master, who did *sin*, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither did this man *sin*, nor his parents” (John ix. 3). They were not more abandoned than others. Again, we read, “Behold, a woman in the city, who was a *sinner*” (Luke vii. 37). Again, “This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a *sinner*” (Luke vii. 39). We read again, on a kindred line of representation, that the multitudes, who thronged our Lord as He walked to the house of Zaccheus, “murmured, saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man who is a *sinner*” (Luke xix. 7). “Many

publicans *and sinners* came and sat down with him" (Matt. ix. 10). The man who was born blind, but afterwards saw, said in reference to a criticism which the Pharisees made, "We know that God heareth not *sinners*" (John ix. 31). There is evident emphasis in the signification. "If the righteous scarcely be saved," says St. Peter, "where shall the ungodly and *the sinner* appear?" (1 Pet. iv. 18). "We, who are Jews by nature," says St. Paul, "and not *sinners of the Gentiles* (that is, *sinners* conspicuous among sinners) believed in Christ Jesus" (Gal. ii, 15). "Go," we read in the Old Testament, "and utterly destroy *the sinners, the Amalekites*" (1 Sam. xv. 18). In the prefatory psalm of the Psalter it is said, "the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor *sinners* in the congregation of the righteous". (Ps. i. 5). We read again in St. John's General Epistle, "whosoever abideth in Christ *sinneth not*; whosoever *sinneth* hath not seen him, neither known him" (1 John iii. 6); "whosoever is born of God *doth not commit sin*; for his seed remaineth in him; and he *cannot sin*, because he is born of God;"—"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil."

May it not then be the case that the word *sinned* in the passage before us is used in its emphatic or intensive signification?

This *is* the case, as is evidenced by the immediately preceding context. In that context we find the Apostle referring to the doom of those who "despise the riches of the Divine goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering," not considering, as they should have done, and therefore "not knowing that the goodness of God," as inclusive of his forbearance and long-suffering, "*is the Hand that leads to repentance.*" Hence, instead of repenting, they stored up to themselves, according to their hardness and impenitent heart, "wrath in the day of wrath," as if it had been ~~treasure~~. Such is the high-handed and defiant sinfulness

of those whose case the Apostle is considering. It is sinfulness *κατ' ἐξοχήν*.

The Apostle depicts their character still farther, when he says of them that they are "factious" (under God's government), and "disobedient to the truth, but obedient to unrighteousness." He had said just a line or two before, that the vilest vices, of the heathen were—in essence—reproduced in their conduct. *Such is their aggravated sinfulness.*

We seem to breathe more freely when we get to see that the Apostle does not teach in this paragraph that all who have lost their innocence *ἀνόμως*, are, if they live and die *ἄνευ νόμου*, helplessly and hopelessly handed over to the endurance of that penalty which is the opposite of "eternal life."

The Apostle does speak, as we have seen, of certain *ἁμαρτωλοί* who shall "perish;" but these *ἁμαρτωλοί* are not to be confounded with those who have, it may be, merely fallen from their innocency. They are sinners who are high-handed and defiant. They are "workers of iniquity," who give themselves *con amore* to their work, as if it were their trade and their privilege.

The *ἀνομοί* are referred to by the Apostle chiefly for the sake of furnishing himself with a stepping-stone by which he might get access to the hearts and consciences of those who are *ἐν νόμῳ*, or let us, by a legitimate and convenient accommodation, say *ἐννομοί*. Hence it is that he dictated the second moiety of verse 12, "and as many as sinned *ἐν νόμῳ* shall be condemned *διὰ νόμου*." He impeaches the *ἀνομοί*, in order that he may get the best possible foothold on which to stand, when feeling constrained to impeach the *ἐννομοί*.

The word *sinned* has consequently here the same accentuated signification as it has in the preceding moiety. And, as regards the verb *κριθήσονται*, it may either be

translated *shall be judged*, the idea of condemnation being subsumed; or it may be freely rendered *shall be condemned*. This latter rendering is Luther's; and, in our public English version, it is given twice to the term as it occurs in John iii. 18, "He that believeth on him is *not condemned*; but he that believeth not has been *condemned* already." Taking the accentuated import of the verb *ἡμαρτον* into account, the idea of *condemnation* must, in the statement before us, be either expressed or subsumed. When the Lord Chief Justice of the universe takes his seat on the pure white throne of his glory, to try those who have been defiantly disobedient, there can be no reasonable doubt about the nature of the sentence that will be passed.

While the Apostle employs the generic *ἄνθρωποι* in both moieties of the verse, and does not specify either Gentiles or Jews, we may accept it as certain that in the second moiety the reference, that subtends the indefinite relative pronoun, is to the unbelieving and impenitent Jews. This reference is demonstrated by the entire texture of the paragraph which immediately succeeds the verses we are considering, and extends to the end of the Chapter.

It is in accordance with this subtended reference that the Apostle says in verse 13: "For not the hearers of the law are righteous," in the judicial finding of God; "but the doers of the law shall be justified."

Regarding this verse, let it be noted that, in both its negative and its affirmative clause, it intentionally accounts for the asseveration in the second moiety of the preceding verse, viz. "That as many as sinned *ἐν νόμῳ*, shall be condemned *διὰ νόμου*." This will certainly be the case, says the Apostle, for not the hearers but the doers of the *νόμος* shall be justified at the Grand Assize. Hearing the *νόμος* read in the Synagogue Service, or reading it by oneself, or carefully and reverentially preserving its voluminous letter in the home,—all this exercise if performed without inter-



weaving the imperatives of the Bible into the texture of the life, is simply treating the Bible as a fetish ; and no wonder that the fetish-worshippers, if unrepentant, should not be justified in the day referred to in verse 16—"The day when God shall judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ."

But what is it that the Apostle means when he says that "the doers of the law shall be justified at the Grand Assize"? The expression has occasioned almost infinite perplexity to multitudes of expositors, more especially when it is placed side by side with the declaration in the 30th verse of the following chapter of the Epistle, the declaration "that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight." Here the Apostle says, "the doers of the law *shall* be justified." There is an "impossibility," says the late Dean Alford, "of being thus justified." "There are no doers of the law," says Hemming. "He is merely illustrating a principle," says Moses Stuart. "The Apostle," says Dr. Wardlaw, "merely lays down the principle of law on the subject of justification." "Doers," says Bengel ; "yes, if they really approve themselves *doers*." "But no one," says Pareus, "is a doer of the law, as the Apostle will afterwards demonstrate ; and therefore no one shall be justified through the law." "Loquitur Paulus de idea," says Melancthon. "They," says Calvin, "who make use of this passage to establish justification by works, deserve to be laughed at even by children (*puerorum cachinnis sunt dignissimi*)." "It may be legitimately argued from this very passage," he continues, "that no one is justified by works ; for if those only who fulfil the law are justified, it follows that no one is justified, for no one can be found who can boast of having fulfilled the law." Hodge goes hand in hand with Calvin, and says that the Apostle "is not speaking of the method of justification available for sinners, and as revealed in the Gospel, but of the principles of justice, which will be applied to all who look to the law for justification. If men rely on

works they must have works." Meyer takes the same cue and says, "Real, actual justification by the law takes place neither among Jews nor among Gentiles, because in no case is there a complete fulfilment." "Sinlessness in the inward disposition," says Shedd, "and perfection in every outward act, are requisite to constitute a ποιήτης," such as the Apostle speaks of.

But all these expositors, and many others, comprehending in particular those who belong to the same school of *doctrinaires*, have, as we conceive, missed entirely the aim of the Apostle, and have consequently misapprehended and misstated his argument: He is not referring in the word νόμος to the moral law; and consequently, when he speaks of the doers, or the ποιηταί, of the law, he is not referring to those who are characterized by "sinlessness in the inward disposition, and by perfection in the outward act." Nor, when he represents the ποιηταί τοῦ νόμου as "justified in the day when God shall bring into judgment the secrets of men by Jesus Christ," does he refer to any peculiar quality or quantity of works of faith and labours of love, as distinguished from the quantity and quality of the righteous deeds done in the body referred to in the 6th verse of this chapter, and in 2 Corinthians v. 10, and other kindred passages, and so emphatically held up to the light in the decisions of the Great Judge, when He shall say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, for I was hungry and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came to me. . . . inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it to me." These were not ποιηταί νόμου in the classical import of the phrase, *law-makers* or *legislators*, nor perhaps in the highest pitch of meaning of which the phrase, absolutely considered, is susceptible, and which it might possibly have borne in a world without sin. But

they were such *ποιηταὶ νόμου* as, in harmony with the requirements of the *νόμος*, repented of their transgressions, bemoaned their shortcomings, turned longingly to the long-suffering God, put their trust in his clemency and propitiousness and tender mercy, and sought thenceforward to pursue—though doubtless with many failures—that which is true, that which is ethically beautiful, that which is ethically good. It should ever be borne in mind that the *νόμος* referred to here is not *the law of morals*, distinctively so called. *It is the written revelation in general.* It is, with the utmost possible distinctness, *the Bible*, as distinguished from *the moral law*. And the Bible of course is a book, not for the absolutely sinless and innocent, but for those who have, by their own wilfulness, missed their way, and stumbled and fallen. It is a book that contains glad tidings of great joy concerning God's compassion and mercy towards the erring and the guilty. They who obey its imperatives—though it may be only imperfectly—are *ποιηταὶ τοῦ νόμου*. Faith in Jesus, as well as holiness of character, is a *ποίησις νόμου*. All works of faith and all labours of love are *ποιήματα νόμου*. The unselfish love which is the product of the inspiration that breathes through faith of God's propitiousness is sublimest poetry. A life of such love is the grandest of all poems. This fulfilling of the law stands in militant antithesis to the hollow, pretentious, resounding, artificial righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees, ancient and modern.

When the Apostle says that the *ποιηταὶ νόμου* will be justified on the day of the Great Assize, it is of moment to bear in mind that, in accordance with the imagery of the Biblical eschatology, the whole proceedings of that great day will consist in judicial processes, and the passing of sentences of justification and condemnation. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that the inspired writer should use the future tense of the verb, and say *δικαιωθήσονται*.

There is, indeed, a preceding justification that is still more frequently referred to in the writings of the Apostle, and in systems of theology, and that is of surpassing importance in Evangelistic labours. But that justification is private, and is conditioned on faith and the great evangelical object embraced by faith. The justification, again, that takes place on the day of Universal Assize is public. It is a sentence passed in the Court of the Universe. And it is conditioned on such works of faith and labours of love as are patent to universal observation and verification.

It is not uninteresting to note that Roman Catholic expositors and divines have felt much difficulty in giving their peculiar idea of *justification*, or *justifaction*, as Dr. Owen calls it, to the verb which the Apostle employs, *δικαιωθῆσονται*. Hence Este admits that here, at least, it must be understood forensically. His opinion is reproduced in modern times by Klee, Adalbert Maier, Reithmayr, and Bisping. Even Augustin of old, while exerting his utmost ingenuity—and that was something extraordinary—to prove that the word, even here, might mean *to make righteous*, felt himself constrained at length to admit its forensic interpretation (*De Spiritu et Lit.*, chap. xxvi.).

The 14th and 15th verses of the Chapter are most strictly a parenthesis, as is evidenced by the consideration that, though we should drop them entirely out of the Apostle's text there would be no break in the continuity of his composition or representation. The parenthetical statements, while enriching the discussion, are by no means essential to the validity of the reasoning. They are to the effect that even heathen, who have no written Revelation, no verbal Bible or *νόμος*, may, to an appreciable degree, fulfil to themselves the function of the Biblical *νόμος* in its relation to human duty and human privilege. The *ἀνομοί*, as well as the *ἐννομοί*, may comply with the great imperatives, that have regard to men as men and to men as sinners, but

such sinners as, notwithstanding their sinfulness, are under the arch of the Divine propitiousness. They may do, by the light of Nature, says the Apostle, the things of the νόμος; for they may be, in the inward correlations of their being, a νόμος to themselves. The life's work, enjoined in the νόμος, is inscribed on the tablets of their minds. And the Apostle's statement assumes *that there are cases* in which the great ethical and evangelical requirements of the νόμος are fulfilled. "*Whenever (ὅταν)*" says he, "Gentiles, who have not a written νόμος, actually do by Nature the things of the νόμος, these, though not having a verbal νόμος, are a νόμος to themselves, shewing the inscription in their minds of the work enjoined in the νόμος." Their inward consciousness, "the man within the breast," bears, with their outward obedience, concurrent testimony to the fact of the actual revelation; while still farther evidence of the same great reality is afforded by the reasonings which they have among themselves when they either inculcate on the one hand, or else vindicate on the other, the actions of those on whom their criticisms are passed. The "Pagan's Debt"—to refer to the remarkable title of John Goodwin's remarkable treatise on this subject—is a reality, because it is indissolubly connected with another reality, the "Pagan's Dowry." There is not a man living who is utterly impenetrable to the rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

Such is the grand idea that underlies the Apostle's representation. It is a little theodice. God's ways are equal and just. They are merciful too,—merciful in relation to all. It is only when mercy is spurned, either by Jews or by Gentiles, that punitive justice steps in to perform its peculiar function.

Bengel proposed to construe the expression *by nature*, not with the statement "do the things of the law," but with the foregoing statement, thus, "when Gentiles who

*by nature* have no written revelation." Benjamin Wills Newton seizes with eagerness upon the transposition, in order to get quit of the idea that there is anything Divine in "nature." But the Apostle was no advocate of atheism in "nature." Such a notion is exegetical impotence. And certainly the apexegesis contained in the concluding clause of the 14th verse, and the first clause of the 15th—"these having not the νόμος are a νόμος to themselves, who shew the work of the νόμος written in their hearts"—is demonstration that the Apostle maintained that there are Gentiles, concerning whom it may be assumed that they do *by nature* the things of the law. They "work righteousness." Only it must never be lost sight of that when the Apostle speaks of "the things of the law," his reference is not to immaculate holiness of character, but to such faith, and such works of faith, as might be reasonably hoped for in the midst of "the true light that lighteth every man coming into the world." In the presence of this light God has not anywhere left Himself "without witness," and evangelical witness; so that men everywhere are "without excuse," if they keep their eyes closed against the Light, and their hearts double-bolted within against the entrance of Him who, though having the right to take full possession, yet patiently stands outside and "knocks."

JAMES MORISON.

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## A DREAM.

*To the Editor of the Expositor.*

SOME seven years ago I ventured to send you a slight account of a discourse on "The Rich Young Ruler," which I chanced to hear on a week-evening in one of our Midland towns.<sup>1</sup> I was in the same town a few weeks ago, on the same evening in the week;

<sup>1</sup> See *The Expositor* for 1877: First Series, Vol. vi. pp. 229 ff.

and, as I had a little time on my hands, I found my way into the same large room at the usual hour for worship. The aspect of the room was slightly changed. Across one end there ran a long table "covered with a fair cloth," on which stood an array of tea and coffee urns; while at the other end, round a large fire, sat some seventy persons of either sex. When I entered, they were gathered round tables, adorned with flowers, and engaged in friendly and animated talk over their cups. But in a few minutes silence was asked for, and the Preacher whom I had heard before rose, and standing on the floor in the middle of the room, made a few remarks, from which I learned that I was "assisting" at a social meeting, held once a Quarter for friendly intercourse and conversation. "A family gathering for homely talk," he called it. And after speaking for a few minutes on the private affairs of the Church, he proceeded to say that last Spring, as they would remember, he was laid aside from work for many weeks, and that, much against the grain, he was compelled to leave them; and seek for health in a more southern climate. During his absence, he had had a dream, a dream about *them* and his work among them, of which, since they were interested in it, he would now tell them as much as he could. And then, in a quiet serious tone, he went on to relate a dream, in which those of your readers who liked his Discourse will, I think, be interested, and of which therefore I venture to send you the best report I can. It went somewhat thus:—

Like most men who work with their brains, I sleep but ill. Like most men who sleep ill, I dream much and often. And, as a rule, my dreams are not of a kind to make them welcome to me; nor do they, so far as I can judge, accord with my natural temperament and bent. Naturally of a somewhat sanguine and hopeful temper, I am, nevertheless, in my dreams, oppressed with a constant sense of failure and obstruction. I am not unpunctual, as you know; yet in my dreams I am for ever too late, and too late on occasions on which it is of the last importance that I should be in time. A lover of order, in my dreams I am the prey of the wildest disorder and confusion. And though I can thankfully acknowledge that I have more than reached the

modest aims with which I set out in life, yet in my dreams I am the perpetual victim of defeat in aims of the gravest moment.

But now and then it happens that I have dreams quite out of my ordinary and standing course, dreams so happy and instructive and bright that they leave a cheerful and stimulating influence with me for many days. Twice in my life I have even dreamed sermons which I could recall when I awoke, and did recall, and write down, and even print ; sermons which seemed to me the immediate gift of Heaven. But I have much oftener lost the good things which God has sent me while I slept, either because they left only an indistinct impression behind them, or because I did not take the pains to get up and write them down while the impression was still fresh and clear.

Now about this time last year, while I was staying in a country house in the South, and sorrowfully waiting for the East wind to blow itself out, and give me back the voice of which it had robbed me, I woke up one night so calmed and thankful and glad that for a few moments I hardly knew myself, and could not at all make out what had befallen me. But, then, my dream began to come back to me ; and, remembering how often I had lost all recollection of night thoughts which at the time it had seemed impossible I should ever forget, I got up, and by the dim flame of the nightlight wrote down the few sentences I could recall. Going back to my bed, other sentences recurred to me, and these too I secured. Three or four times I repeated this operation, till I had some five or six pages of note-paper scribbled over with my pencil. In the morning I threw them into a consecutive form, and had then a tiny MS., which I resolved that I would read to you on some convenient occasion. Unfortunately, however, I put it into my writing-case with a large number of other papers ; and in sorting them when I got home, and destroying those



which were no longer of any use, I destroyed by mistake the very paper I wished most to preserve. And so the main substance of my dream fled from me for ever. Nor could I ever after recall more than its general outline, and the one sentence on which all turned. This, then, is all I can give you to-night.

It was Sunday morning; and, as usual, I came down to preach to you. But, what is not usual, you were *all* in your places when I entered the pulpit; and as I looked round, I could see you all sitting in your characteristic attitudes, and listening with fixed and earnest attention—which I am thankful to say is by no means unusual. Without pausing for any preliminary service, and as if it were the most natural thing in the world, I instantly opened the Bible at one of the Gospels, and gave out this text, which you will not find in any of the Gospels, though I don't think you would be much surprised to find it in one of them.

*And as He passed through the temple, one of them that stood by cast a flower at his feet. And Jesus, stooping down, took up the flower, and said, Blessed be thou of My Father.*

From this text, which I can remember word for word, I preached to you, without note or book, for a full half-hour, though it did not seem more than a few minutes to me, so happily did my thoughts flow and the fit words come. But, alas, I remember nothing of my sermon save the text, at least in the exact form in which it was delivered. All I can recall is that I began by saying that, though we were not told who it was that paid this kindly act of homage to our Lord, and no hint of sex was given us, yet surely it must have been *a woman* who had this delicate inspiration: a woman who, seeing Him look pensive and sad perhaps, longed to wake a smile on his pure face, or seeing the love in his looks, the benediction in his eyes, yearned to acknowledge and respond to it, and so, with shy reverence

and timid involuntary sympathy, dropped at his feet a flower.

And, then, I went on to say that, though we were not told what flower it was she offered Him, yet surely it must have been *a wild flower*—some lily or anemone from the downs, or a wild rose plucked from the hedge, not one of the rare and choice blossoms of the Jerusalem gardens; since there is a beauty, a purity, a sweet and wholesome fragrance about these children of the field and the wood which lift them far above “the proud and perfumed beauties of our hothouse harems,” a charm far above that of “voluptuous garden roses,” which would make one of these natural blooms a far more appropriate offering to lay at *his* feet.

But, of course, the main body of my homily was taken up with an endeavour to enforce the lesson of this singular text; which lesson I took to be, the immense worth of those half unconscious acts of love, those slight “attentions,” those delicate and reserved courtesies by which we minister to each other’s finer susceptibilities; and to shew you how they often carry a sweeter and more efficient comfort to the heart, and render a more precious service, than actions which bulk much larger in our eyes and in the eyes of the world, and are held to be of much higher value. In many ways I tried to convince you that just as, in all probability, the Lord Jesus was more refreshed in spirit by the gentle flower-giving courtesy of a woman who was a stranger to Him, or by the love and sorrow and insight which moved Mary of Bethany to pour the fragrant nard—some faint odour of which still lingers in our hearts—on his sacred feet “against his burying,” than He would have been by some act of daring or devotion on the part of Peter or of Thomas; so we may often do more for our neighbours by apparently trifling manifestations of a thoughtful love, by attentions that cost us very little, than by larger-looking deeds of service which the world would notice and praise. But what

these ways of thoughts were, and how I trod them, and what illustrations I culled as we passed along, I have quite forgotten, and must leave you to imagine for yourselves.

All else that I can remember is that, when I woke, I could not but think that, even to me, God Himself had deigned to shew one of those gracious and kindly "attentions," in sending me this happy, unsought for, unexpected dream, and in letting the sermon sing itself like a song through my weary and disheartened mind,—preaching to me who have so often to preach to others, and secretly shedding energies of life and peace into my soul. For such delicate and happy adventures as this dream of mine may be common enough with innocent children and pure loving women ; but with men they are rare, and therefore precious, and to be received with thanksgiving.

And then, finally, I thought : If God can even now fill this time-hardened and sense-fouled soul of mine with a pure and quiet gladness, and hush it into a holy tranquillity by a mere dream,—what joys must He have in store for those who love Him, when that which is mortal in them shall be swallowed up of life ?

O, the pretty wild-flower God had given me while I slept ! Should I not look up and bless his Name ?

There were tears in the Preacher's voice as he closed his report of this striking Dream, tears too in the eyes of some of his auditors : and perhaps, Sir, you may think it not unworthy of a wider audience than that which listened to his words.

CARPUS.

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## NOTE ON HOSEA vi. 1-3.

THERE seems to be an oversight on one point in Mr. Deane's excellent paper in the March number of this Magazine (p. 200). The passage, Hosea vi. 1-3 is taken as a prophecy, and as prefiguring our Lord's resurrection. But surely these verses should be read, not as the words of the prophet himself, but as an expression of the superficial repentance of Ephraim, a repentance whose unstable nature is immediately afterwards declared by the prophet (verses 4-7).

The LXX. by inserting λέγοντες before verse 1, and thus connecting the passage with Chapter v. (followed, according to Mr. Drake, by the Chaldee and Syriac versions), were on the right track of interpretation, which has been lost sight of by most commentators, though not by Ewald or Dr. R. Williams. Compare Hosea viii. 2, where again the insincere self-defence of Israel interrupts the prophetic rebuke, "They cry unto me, My God, we know thee, we Israel."

The phrase "after two days,"<sup>1</sup> "on the third day," a common one for denoting a short indefinite period, was naturally taken as implying a reference to the Resurrection; with which however this passage as above understood has no connection. Nor need this conclusion be regretted, for under any rendering of the verses the reference was but a doubtful one; and here, as in so many other instances, the removal of an indefensible outwork only strengthens the central position.

P. LILLY.

Mr. Deane did not express himself quite clearly, I think. But he did not *intend* to pronounce any verdict on the true rendering of this passage, nor so much as to refer to the modern interpretations of it. All he meant was to affirm that *the Jews* read it as referring to the Resurrection, and that a general consensus of early Christian writers endorsed this view.

EDITOR.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. iv. 10; Deut. xix. 4; Josh. iii. 4; 1 Sam. iv. 7, xix. 7; 2 Sam. iii. 17; 2 Kings xiii. 5; 1 Chron. xi. 2; St. Luke xiii. 32; St. John ii. 19. The form of expression is hidden, in most of these passages, in the English Version, by the rendering "heretofore" or "in time past."

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